

Walsall & Willenhall CHRONICLE

Thursday, March 2, 2017

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Claim closures would harm elderly and vulnerable

GIVE US A YEAR TO SAVE LIBRARIES

Report by Jack Averty

A PLEA for a 12-month stay of execution on library closures has been made to Walsall Council to enable time to come up with an action plan.

The closures will mean that the elderly and other vulnerable residents will become socially isolated, residents say.

The extra time would give those branches affected time to come up with a sustainable plan to stay open.

Scrutiny bosses fear the plan to shut nine of the borough's libraries in order to save £1.8 million may prove more expensive in the long term by piling pressure on the social care budget.

This week, councillors on the council's health and social care scrutiny board met to discuss the matter. Chairman Councillor Marco Longhi, who represents Pelsall, asked for the cabinet to give Pelsall and other libraries on the hit list time to come up with a sustainable model to keep them open.

He said maybe only two or three would take such action, but must be given the chance.

The plea comes after a full meeting of the council agreed to look again at proposals for the closure of Pelsall library, but not until June.

Executive director at Walsall Council, Simon Neilson, told the scrutiny board: "We don't want to be in danger of having a budget save on leisure, adding pressure to social care. We could end up with a budget that doesn't balance anymore."

Concerns have been raised over the closure of Pelsall library, with campaigners arguing that it is the second most popular in the borough, and that the building it is housed in will have to stay open anyway.

Councillor Gary Perry, who has said the decision 'beggars belief', has called for a consultation over the closure to be repeated amid discrepancies over visitor figures.

He said: "Councillor Fitzpatrick announced there was an error in the visitor figures. Whether these figures show more or less visitors, we have gone out to public consultation with a set of figures which could have skewed the debate."

He moved a motion at last week's council meeting asking members to reconsider plans after handing in a 3,000-signature petition. However, the motion was rejected, with Councillor Sean Coughlan, Labour leader of the council, saying the motion would ruin his proposed budget. But he did promise to look again at the proposed closure in June, which is when the library had been earmarked to close.

QUICK-THINKING CAINE ABLE TO SAVE HIS DAD'S LIFE



Left, Caine Wildman, aged 14, who saved the life of his father Craig – centre – on the sofa with, from left, Indy, six, Jensen, five, and Vinnie, 11

A FATHER has told how his hero son saved his life after he suffered respiratory failure.

Craig Wildman was playing with his five-year-old son Jensen at their home in Moxley, Darlaston, when he passed out. Daughter Indy, six, was also with the pair at the time.

The youngsters thought their father was playing a game, but when Caine, aged 14, arrived home early from school he saw that his father's lips had turned purple.

Caine, a pupil at Royal Sandwell Academy, performed CPR for 10 minutes on the 40-year-old before paramedics arrived. Caine then looked after his siblings. Kara, the children's mother and Craig's wife, was on her way home from work.

Craig was taken to hospital, where he spent three days in intensive care. He had suffered respiratory failure as a result of undiagnosed pneumonia on both lungs. Doctors insisted that if it wasn't for Caine's speedy and calm reactions, Craig might not have survived.

Craig, who works as a custodial manager at HMP Featherstone, said: "I had put tea in for everyone and sat down with Jensen to play on his tablet. It was then that I passed out on the settee. All I remember was coughing and then I went over onto my side. Indy thought I was playing a game and said 'silly Daddy', and climbed on top of me. I fell onto Jensen, and he got out from under me." He added: "Caine wasn't supposed to be home because he had

an after school club, but for some reason, this day it was cancelled. It must be fate.

"He got home at about 4.10pm, and the kids were sitting in front of the TV. He thought I was just lying down so went upstairs and got changed, but when he came downstairs he saw my lips were purple and my eyes had rolled back into my head.

"He phoned an ambulance and started performing CPR. They told him on the phone to open the door so the paramedics could get straight in. I didn't come round until I was in the back of the ambulance, but he was doing CPR on me for about 10 minutes. "I'm so grateful to Caine, he's my little hero. Well, maybe not so little, he's bigger than me now!"

CRACKDOWN

New litter enforcers hand out 250 fines

NEW litter enforcers in Walsall have handed out 250 fines in six months.

Private enforcement firm 3GS came in to the borough at the end of September to clamp down on littering, dog fouling and fly-tipping. Figures have revealed that 250 fixed penalty notices have been dished out since then.

Meanwhile, a councillor has called for more patrols in town centres which he believes are not being properly covered. In the WS10 areas of Darlaston and Wednesbury, no fines have been given out.

Councillor Doug James, who represents Darlaston North, said: "Darlaston and Moxley people are proud of their town and look after their homes but something is very wrong when litter is polluting our streets and neighbourhoods. I come across litter eyesores, mountains of litter and waste.

"Too much emphasis is placed on town centres. People in our residential estates deserve a better service."

EMERGENCY

Man freed from car after tree hit

A MAN was cut free and taken to hospital after his car smashed into a tree in Walsall on Sunday night.

The injured man in his 40s was cut free from the red Ford Transit van by firefighters after being trapped in the car in Broad Lane, Bloxwich. West Midlands Ambulance Service said he suffered chest, leg and ankle injuries and was taken to Queen Elizabeth hospital in Birmingham. He was given pain relief to help stabilise his condition.

CARAVANS

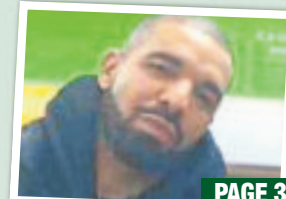
Travellers pitch up at ex-leisure centre

TRAVELLERS have moved on to the site of a former leisure centre in Walsall Wood.

Around a dozen caravans pitched up outside what used to be Oak Park Leisure Centre, on Lichfield Road. Walsall Council confirmed they were aware of the illegal encampment and were looking into enforcement action. It is unclear whether the travellers are the same ones who moved off Wolverhampton Street car park in Willenhall in recent days.

INSIDE

Drake makes fan's day with shop visit



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MP's gripe over Chase Line overcrowding



Walsall MP David Winnick

WALSALL MP David Winnick has written to London Midland with complaints of overcrowding on the Chase Line.

The line, from Rugeley to Birmingham, has been dogged with serious overcrowding issues. The Walsall North MP has written to Patrick Verwer, managing director for London Midland for the second time with his concerns.

He said: "Constituents continue to complain about the poor service. I had written previously about this; the reply I received stated that due to a national shortage of diesel trains it was not possible to get more capacity until the introduction of electric services in 2018. According to that explanation, it will then be possible to carry 50 per cent more passengers than currently."

"Nevertheless, dissatisfaction continues, including the fact that the trains are often late, which of course means that employees find it both difficult to get to work on time and take longer in the evening to get home."

"In my latest letter, I have urged that all this should be looked into again at the most senior level of the company."

The firm has previously said it will be unable to increase capacity on any of its routes until the introduction of electric services in 2018.

The Chase Line stops at Hednesford, Cannock, Bloxwich, Walsall and Bescot Stadium. London Midlands spokesman Francis Thomas said: "Electric trains can only be introduced once these physical works are completed."

"We continue to look for more diesel capacity across the country but the reality is no more diesel trains are available."

A MOTHER of three who pleaded guilty to possession of cocaine and cannabis was given a suspended sentence.

Police found around three grams of cocaine and 12 grams of cannabis at the Well Lane, Bloxwich, home, of Tia Copeland.

The property was searched by officers after they had stopped Copeland and her boyfriend, Nathan Morrison, at shops near their home.

Morrison, who is also set to be sentenced by Wolverhampton crown Court as part of a linked case on March 22, had gone in to get some food and after being approached by officers as he left, ran away, resulting in a chase.

Mr Ian Ball, prosecuting, said the drugs were found in a room which she said the children did not have access to. She told officers the cocaine was being kept for a friend with an addiction problem.

Copeland was charged with possession with intent to supply in relation to the drugs at her property, while her boyfriend was charged with possession of cocaine, cannabis, heroin and crack cocaine, with intent to supply.

Copeland, who was on benefits at the time, was given 12 months, suspended for two years and ordered to carry out a 30-day rehabilitation activity requirement.

In defence, Mr Milo Turner said Copeland had a clean criminal record, no history of drug addiction of any type and that she was completely unaware of the scale of her partner's drug dealing.

Mother gets suspended term over drugs find

Pupils' efforts bring in £9,000

SCHOOL pupils in Walsall have raised more than £9,000 for charity.

Students at Abu Bakr Primary and Girls School enjoyed a range of activities, which saw £9209.02 raised for the Ummah Welfare Trust and their Syria Emergency Appeal.

The campaign will deliver blankets, food, clothing to Aleppo's evacuees as well as other families across Syria.

Headteacher Hasina Varachia said: "It was a magnificent effort from all our pupils, parents and staff."

"They showed boundless enthusiasm in raising such a substantial sum for such a worthy cause."

"The pupils enjoyed wearing non-uniform in colours representing the Syrian flag, donating loose change and baking and eating some fantastic cakes."

Extra handrails at town hall passed

MORE handrails will be installed outside Walsall's Grade II-listed Town Hall after planning permission was granted.

Walsall Council asked to install new ones after officers said disabled people needed better access. Permission was granted last week.

End in sight on 10-year contaminated land row

A 10-YEAR dispute over contaminated land on a housing estate will be settled by the end of March, it has been confirmed.

A public inquiry to find out who was responsible for the Stonegate housing estate in Short Heath being built on contaminated land, at the site of the former Willenhall Gasworks, was held in December 2015.

The land was identified as contaminated back in 2007 following a three-year investigation and, although the inquiry took only two weeks, its findings were sent to the Secretary of State for a final decision - and residents are still waiting for answers.

MP Therese Coffey MP under-secretary of state for environmental and rural life opportunities, has now confirmed that residents will have their answer by the end of March. In a letter to Walsall North MP David Winnick, she said the lengthy process was necessary.

Findings

"This is required to assess the risk to human health and the environment and to ensure that the appropriate person or organisation pays for the land to be cleared up," she said.

"The inspector submitted his findings from the public local inquiry to the department in September 2016."

"Since then, Defra officials have been considering those findings and their potential implications for all parties associated with this appeal. They will shortly provide me with advice so that I can make a decision as to whether, and to what extent, to accept the Inspector's findings. Defra officials will be in a position to relay that decision no later than the end of March."

It is anticipated the clean-up bill could cost between £3 and £7m with Walsall Council claiming Jim 2 Limited was liable for the contamination.

The council has previously said the firm had bought, demolished, cleared and prepared the former gasworks site for residential housing and, in doing so, 'caused or knowingly permitted the contamination on the site.'

Mr Winnick said: "Residents are understandably most concerned at the considerable delay in the resolution being reached."

Roll up, roll up, for bowling chance



The Fordbrook Indoor Bowling Club are looking for new members. Taking a bowl is chairman, Don Overtown

A BOWLING club in Walsall is trying to recruit new members to secure its future.

Fordbrook Indoor Bowling Club could close if no new players sign up, with club chiefs saying they will not be able to rent a space to play in.

The club, which started 30 years ago, has seen a fall in members over the last five years. Dave Edwards, who has been the club's captain for 24 years, said: "It's more of a social atmosphere than serious play for

the most part. At our age we can't do much so the activity helps with health because you're not just sitting at home all day."

There are trips to other bowling areas around the country and they have travelled as far as Cyprus to enjoy their sport. "There's always something going on. If people are interested then they should come along," said Mr Edwards.

The club currently has 28 members, but it needs at least 40 if it is to have any hope of staying open.

It meets twice a week at St Michael's church hall, Pelsall, Walsall.

Players get together on Mondays for league games, where they compete against a variety of teams.

They also meet up on Thursdays to play socially when anyone can go along.

Hot drinks and refreshments are available for people who want to attend and see if it's the sport for them. Their oldest member is 95 and the club itself is open to anyone over 50.

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Officers go in shake-up of services at authority

TWO top officers at Sandwell Council have left their posts as part of an independent trust's plans to improve the authority's failing children's services.

Director of children's services Matthew Sampson and director for children and families Sharon Moore have both stood down with immediate effect, bosses have confirmed. Jim Leivers has been appointed to head the children's services department on an interim basis, with a new temporary head for children and families set to be appointed in the coming weeks.

Children's services at Sandwell has been rated inadequate twice in the past four years and is set to be taken over by an independent trust as a result of long-standing failings.

Jan Britton, chief executive of Sandwell Council, said: "Mr Jim Leivers has been appointed as interim director of children's services and a new director of children and families will be appointed in due course."

Mr Leivers left his job as chief executive of North East Lincolnshire Council in March 2004, following a damning report by auditors which criticised the council's management and finances. Then in 2015 as Oxfordshire County Council's director for children, education and families, he apologised to 373 girls and boys who the authority had failed to identify as victims of sexual exploitation.

Children's services at Sandwell has been rated inadequate twice in the past four years.

Deceased man's family sought

THE family of a man who died last month are being sought by council officers.

Environmental health officers want to get in touch with the family of Joseph Hathaway, of 23, Oswin Place, Walsall, who died at home on Wednesday, January 25.

He was born on December 29, 1950 to Walter and Beryl Hathaway and thought to have a brother and sister still living in Walsall but details are unclear.

Mr Hathaway was married twice, first to Marilyn Carol Lyons on December 30, 1972 and then to Julie Elizabeth Smith on June 29, 1991.

Rambling round county's villages

THE Walsall Group of the Ramblers will be heading to Willey, near Lutterworth, for a seven-mile circular walk on Sunday. 'Three Leicestershire Villages' is a moderate walk on field paths and tracks.

Non-members are always welcome and can obtain more information from the walk leaders on 01922 453805 or 01922 863672.

Co-op coup as Drake ruffles feathers



Drake, left, with shopworker Josh Letford

RAP superstar Drake dropped in on an empty Walsall supermarket, stunning a fan who was working on the till. Fresh from two sell-out performances at the Barclaycard Arena in Birmingham on Wednesday and Thursday, on Friday night he visited the Co-operative Food branch on Broadway.

Josh Letford, aged 22, could not believe what he was seeing when he saw the man awarded Best International Artist at the Brits walk into his shop with two bodyguards and his own friend, Walsall's rising star Jorja

Smith, at about 8.30pm. Student Mr Letford, who is also from Walsall, said: "It was a bit crazy.

"I saw two gentlemen enter the store but I was on the till and I couldn't see who they were. I saw their heads and I didn't see anything else. I saw someone I know (Jorja Smith) come to the till and the next thing I saw Drake around the corner. I lost my breath and I was like: 'hero,' all these lines. I shook his hand and I asked for a picture and that is how it came to be."

Miss Smith, who was placed fourth

on the prestigious BBC Sound Of 2017 list of promising new artists, had accompanied Drake at his show on Thursday. The group had visited the supermarket so she could buy some sweets.

And Mr Letford said of Miss Smith: "I actually know her from childhood when we would go to church together. I'm a massive fan of her music and I know she's going to go on to big things. She was a supporting act for Drake while he was here, but I never in a million years thought she would bring him here."

Under-fire prison is 'rife with drugs and violence'

FEATHERSTONE prison is rife with drugs and violence with inmates choosing to be locked up alone for months on end as they live in fear, a shock report has revealed.

An unannounced inspection by the prison inspectorate found 'very high' levels of violence and 'widespread' drug use.

Other findings include prisoners' showers in a 'disgraceful condition', inmates struggling to get access to 'basic essentials' including clean sheets and being forced to live in 'dirty' cells with poor ventilation.

Peter Clarke, the chief inspector of prisons, said there had been a 'shocking worsening in standards' at the South Staffordshire jail, situated near the Walsall border, since it was last inspected in 2013. The Ministry of Justice, which runs the prison, described the decline as 'unacceptable'.

The biggest concern raised by Mr Clarke and his team was that of drug use and its links with violence and self-isolation.

Around two-thirds of inmates told inspectors it was easy to get drugs, while more than one-fifth said they had developed a drug problem whilst staying in the prison.

Psychoactive

The inspectors criticised the prison for doing 'too little' to reduce drug supply.

Psychoactive substances, previously known as legal highs, were the key cause of the problem. The report said: "The widespread use of psychoactive substances was a significant threat to the safety of prisoners. The prison wasn't monitoring the extent of the problem and didn't have a strategy or action plan to reduce drug availability."

This problem has led to a considerable increase in violence, the report added, with attacks against staff increasing the most. More than half of the inmates said they had felt unsafe, while levels of violence and intimidation were recorded as 'very high' and 'often related to drugs and debt'. A total of 37 per cent of prisoners said they felt unsafe at the time of the inspection, compared to just 15 per cent during the 2013 inspection.

Some prisoners resorted to self-isolation, asking to be locked up for nearly 24 hours a day. In some instances this lasted for months. Inmates resorted to this as they were 'living in fear' because, in most cases, they had got into debt over drugs.

Shayne: I jumped at chance to be Wolves boss for Joel charity



Coronation Street star Shayne Ward, taking part in the charity



Joel Richards, centre, with his grandfather Patrick, left, and his uncle Adrian

SOAP star and singer Shayne Ward has spoken ahead of taking up the role of manager for a charity football match at Walsall FC's Bescot Stadium. The match will pitch the 'Smiling Saddlers' against the 'Compton Wolves'.

Corrie favourite and former X Factor winner Shayne will manage Compton Wolves in the match on Saturday, May 13, which will raise money for Compton Hospice and Smile for Joel – set up in memory of 19-year-old Joel Richards from Wednesbury, who was killed in the horror attack in Sousse in 2015.

His uncle Adrian and grandfather Patrick, were also among 30 British tourists murdered – while Joel's younger brother Owen survived. Shayne said how he 'jumped at the chance of being involved, after he was approached by organiser, Kevin Cooper. He explained: "I admire Kevin and what he's achieved in these football matches. I'm honoured to be involved."

Katie Price is the Smiling Saddlers' boss.

Shayne said: "I want to be fit enough for this match. It's great to see that we have a lot of old professionals playing on both sides.

Shayne will join a host of famous faces, including EastEnders actor Jake Wood, boxer Joe Calzaghe and former Wolves midfielder Jamie O'Hara. Tickets are available from www.eticketing.co.uk/walsallfc and cost £10 for adults, £5 for children. VIP packages are also available for £35 or on 01922 651416.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Health trust new chaplain named

A NEW Muslim chaplain has been appointed at Walsall Healthcare, which runs Manor Hospital.

Ahmed Sallou, aged 37, is already a chaplain at New Cross Hospital in Wolverhampton. He was born in Walsall and teaches at the Al Farouq Mosque in Milton Street, Palfrey.

He also runs after school classes for children at Joseph Leckie Academy.

Mr Sallou said: "This is a key role.

"I know from my time at New Cross that I will need to offer support at some very difficult times for patients and their families."

Precious Tolkien sketches on show

JRR Tolkien fans will get the chance to see a new exhibition celebrating the author of The Lord of the Rings' links with Staffordshire.

The exhibition into the early years of JRR Tolkien and his time spent in Staffordshire, has already been seen by more than 70,000 visitors since it launched in March 2016.

It will visit Burntwood Library, based on Sankeys Corner, Bridge Cross Road, Burntwood, from March 1 until April 8.

Highlights include rare photos and copies of original sketches by Tolkien.

£3.5k is raised at casino night

BUSINESSES raised £3,500 for a charity appeal at a casino to boost a hospice and a mayor's campaign.

The Best of Walsall held its charity fun gaming night at The Grosvenor Casino in Bentley Mill Way.

Prizes ranged from an iPad to the use of a Mercedes Benz for a weekend.

Mayor of Walsall, Councillor Kath Phillips said: "I was blown away by the generosity from local businesses. St Giles Walsall Hospice does a fantastic job and is very close to my heart."

Calling all quizzers for hospice funds

QUIZZERS can put their heads together in aid of St Giles Hospice, Walsall tomorrow night (Friday).

A prize quiz is being held at Hawkins Sports & Social Club, Copice Lane, Cheslyn Hay, from 8.30pm.

Entry fee is £10 for teams of up to five players. A raffle will also swell the funds. Refreshments will be available, including samosas and cobs and a cake sale.

Call Georgina Bates for more information on 01922 602520.

Housing plans lodged

A FORMER equestrian centre could be transformed into five homes if plans are given the go-ahead. Walsall Council will make a decision on the site in Longwood Road, Aldridge, which is thought to have closed more than 10 years ago but has been used for nothing since.

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COUNTY NEWS

15pc increase in temporary posts

TEMPORARY posts in the West Midlands rose by 15 per cent in 2016, according to a study.

Research by the Association of Professional Staffing Companies revealed permanent vacancies also increased, up five per cent year-on-year to January. There was a particular rise in temporary posts in the legal and IT sectors.

Julie Selby, of APSCo, said: "After months of increased optimism across the West Midlands, professional job availability in the temporary market has risen once again."

Mixed results on business rates

THE Black Country Chamber of Commerce says there will be winners and losers when the new business rates revaluations kick in next month.

The region's seven metropolitan borough councils will keep all business rates revenue generated from April 1 when the existing revenue support grant from central Government stops.

Overall West Midlands retail rates will go down 11 per cent on average, offices by 16 and industry seven.

Chamber chief Corin Crane said there was already a backlog of individual appeals against existing rates.

Charges increased by fire service

WEST Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority is increasing the amount residents pay in their council tax for the service by 1.99 per cent.

At a full meeting of the authority last week, members approved a budget for 2017/18 which means the fire service part of Band D Council Tax bills will go up by £1.11 for the year to £57.14.

In 2017/18, WMFRA will get £54.7m from the Government and will raise £39.4m via council tax.

Justice scheme cuts down on re-offending

A SCHEME tackling anti-social behaviour by young people across the West Midlands has helped 78 people since it started in 2014.

The Restorative Justice programme, run by the West Midlands Safer Travel Partnership, encourages young people to understand and pay back for what they have done, instead of prosecuting them.

Police said just one in 20 young people who have undertaken the programme have offended since.

Flying high on top list

COSFORD'S Royal Air Force Museum has been voted in the top 10 on a list of the UK's best-loved free attractions.

The museum came seventh out of 50 destinations. It's the highest-ranked museum on the list, compiled by National Express.

Job losses edge closer after meeting

CONTROVERSIAL cuts which will see nine libraries closed and hundreds of jobs axed have moved a step closer.

Despite dozens of anti-cuts campaigners demonstrating on the steps of Walsall Council house the authority has approved its belt-tightening spending plan for the next financial year.

The authority also approved a near five per cent council tax increase from April. And it means the ruling Labour

group now has the green light to push ahead with its proposed cuts, which will see the local history centre relocated and services across the borough lose funding.

Martin Lynch, from the Walsall Against Cuts protest group who demonstrated outside last Thursday's meeting, said: "There is no doubt that unless this process is brought to a halt there will be nothing left of local government services over and above the

statutory services by the end of the decade." The council has approved a £620 million spending plan and Councillor Sean Coughlan, the leader of Walsall Council, confirmed the authority would be pushing ahead with its proposed savings, outlined last month, providing no better alternatives emerge between now and April.

Plans include shutting Bechdale, Blakenall, New Invention, Pelsall, Pleck, Pheasey, Rushall, South Wal-

sall and Walsall Wood libraries, axing 420 jobs and cutting crossing patrols for category two schools that have been without a crossing patrol for at least six months. Councillor Coughlan said: "We have to make really tough decisions and stand by them."

Councillors had been asked to rethink plans to close Pelsall library after a 3,000 strong petition was handed in, but a motion calling for the rethink was voted down.

One per cent pay cut is on cards for councillors

Report by Jack Averty

WALSALL councillors will be asked to take a one per cent pay cut as the authority continues with its cost-cutting measures.

All staff at the council, including executives, have already agreed to have their pay frozen, for the next financial year.

Now the 60 elected members will be asked to take a pay cut.

If they agree, their basic salary and any other payments they receive for council business will be reduced by one per cent.

The council needs to save £86 million by 2020.

Councillor Sean Coughlan, the Labour leader of the council, said: "The view of cabinet was that if we were to ask staff to take a reduction in pay then it was only right that councillors took the same."

"I really cannot see any councillor voting against the reduction, it would send the wrong message out."

Under regulations, any council pay decrease needs to go through an independent remuneration panel. This is why their pay is being negotiated separately to that of council staff who have already agreed a reduction.

Evidence

Councillor Coughlan gave his evidence to the panel on Friday, and told them he thinks council pay should be reduced by one per cent.

Councillor Mike Bird, the leader of the Conservative Party in Walsall, also gave his evidence to the panel on the same day. He agreed with Councillor Coughlan and said his group would be happy to take the one per cent reduction.

The panel are expected to reach their one per cent reduction conclusion this week before giving their recommendations to the council.

The recommendations will then be voted on at the authority's next full council meeting, with all members expected to vote in favour of it.

Councillor Bird said: "It is only right and proper that we take a reduction if other council staff are."

"Councillor Coughlan is taking the credit for this but it was actually my idea."

"The public seem to think that we elected members earn a lot but we do not. This one per cent reduction will probably equate to around £1 a week for me."

The one per cent reduction has been budgeted for in the council's corporate budget plan which was passed by full council last week.

Vets walk it for wellbeing award



Ed Newbould, head of team engagement and development with veterinary nurse Nicola Bond and Millie

A VETERINARY group with a practice in Bloxwich has won an industry award in recognition of the initiatives it has introduced to ensure its team remains happy, healthy and fulfilled in their work.

White Cross Vets scooped the Society of Practising Veterinary Surgeons' inaugural Wellbeing Award.

The family-run group, which operates 16 UK practices, including its premises in Leamore Lane, won the large business category after the judges scored entrants on everything from development opportunities through to stress reduction initiatives and how they promote wellbeing.

Popular employment initiatives that White Cross

Vets offers include a day off and cake for birthdays, a team member health care scheme and four donation days a year where they can volunteer with a charity of their choice.

The group also recently started offering subsidised Fitbits and gym membership, which have immediately proved to be hugely popular, as well as mental health training.

Ed Newbould, head of team engagement and development at White Cross Vets, says: "This award is a major coup for us and further reinforces our ongoing commitment to creating a great working environment, where our team can thrive."

No keeping up with the Jones fans in sell-out

SOME might think It's Not Unusual - but all 6,000 tickets for pop legend Sir Tom Jones' summer concert at Cannock Chase sold out in just one day.

Tickets for the Delilah singer's appearance at on July 9 went on sale on Friday and were sold out by Saturday.

He is part of a line-up for three days of concerts run by the Forestry Commission, as part of its Forest Live series. Other acts include Elbow, who will be in Staffordshire on July 7, and Rick Astley, on July 8.

A Forestry Commission spokesman said: "Tickets for Sir Tom Jones went on sale last week and sold out. Obviously we are really pleased, one, to have someone of that calibre and also that it's sold out."

Unwanted

He said he was unable to confirm how many tickets have sold for its other concerts - but said that they are 'selling really strongly'.

A waiting list for disappointed fans of the singer-turned judge on The Voice - which moved to a ITV slot for the first time this year - has now been set up and concert-goers can apply online for unwanted/returned Chase tickets at www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/beeh-ajmhhe

However, there are still tickets remaining for Sir Tom fans with his Forestry Commission-organised concerts at Sherwood Forest in Nottinghamshire on Saturday, June 24 and Delamere Forest in Cheshire on Sunday, July 1.

Van tour to gather feedback on NHS

A CAMPER van is touring Walsall gathering people's views on health services.

NHS Walsall Clinical Commissioning Group will visit people around the borough as part of its Big Conversation from today (Thursday).

The tour was starting at Asda in Woodhall Street, Bloxwich, from 10am. The van will be parked outside supermarkets, libraries, leisure centres, markets and places of worship.

Staff and volunteers will be asking for views on urgent care, stroke services, GP services and community services.

Chairman of NHS Walsall CCG, Dr Anand Rischie, said: "I would encourage everyone to take part." A full schedule is available online at www.walsallccg.nhs.uk

Beertrice makes its debut at ale festival

A NEW ale has been created for the Walsall's annual Campaign for Real Ale festival. Beertrice, a 4.8 per cent strength citrus pale ale, will be on sale at the Real Ale and Cider Festival from March 9 to 11 in The MPV venue in Whittimere Street.

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Centre proposed to help disabled

A CENTRE to support people living with disabilities could be introduced in Walsall. The community support centre, in Willenhall Road, Darlaston, could see an existing vacant property changed into the centre, if proposals are accepted.

It is understood to have previously been used as an office and canteen and originally constructed in the Victorian era as a school. The proposed centre will operate as a day respite facility for disabled people, providing a place for people living with disabilities to receive daytime care.

Contest chance to show off talent

COMPETITORS can vie to prove Great Wyrley Carnival's Got Talent.

The contest takes place on Sunday, March 5 at 6pm, at Harrison's Sports & Social Club, Wharwell Lane, and is open to anyone living or attending school in either Great Wyrley or Cheslyn Hay. Entrants can be any age and have any talent and can be groups or individuals.

Prizes will be awarded of £50, £25, £15. Entry forms available from Pauline Kelsey on 01922 414647. Tickets for supporters are £3.

The carnival will be on June 24.

Entries open for club's 10k run

ENTRIES have opened for Aldridge Running Club's 10k race on June 11.

It will be the club's 26th 10k race and will be run alongside a 4.3km Fun Run and children's races.

The 10k race will start at 10.45am in Portland Road. It will cost £14, or £12 for affiliated members in advance or £16/£14 on the day.

Its 4.3k course will start at 10.30am. It will cost runners £9 to pay in advance and £11 on the day. Entries close at 10am on the day.

Surplus tiles perfect fit to help students

A RETAILER is giving surplus stock to help students train. Tile Giant will give about 10,000 tiles a year to Walsall Construction Training Centre.

The centre trains 14-and-16-year-olds who have been referred by social services or schools to follow an alternative curriculum.

Tile Giant general manager Darren Burrows said: "We have been looking for some time how to make the best use of our surplus stock and this is the perfect fit."

Safe stolen in burglary

A SMALL safe was stolen from a house in Argyle Road, Walsall.

Burglars entered the back garden and forced a window open with a chisel between midnight on February 17 and 12.30pm on February 20.

Call 101 and quote reference number 20WS/36808R/17.

Iceland will open food warehouse at Bescot

ICELAND will be opening a third store in Walsall creating dozens of jobs.

The frozen goods giant confirmed it is bringing a new 'food warehouse' to the Bescot Retail Park which will be twice the size of a typical high street store.

The chain confirmed the existing stores at Jerome Retail Park and Union Street, Wednesbury, will be unaffected and remain open as normal.

A letter sent to Walsall Council explaining the 'food warehouse' concept said: "Iceland food warehouse represents an exciting new trading format which differs from and complements our traditional high street retail offer."

"Food warehouse stores are located on out of town retail parks and in most cases are twice the size of traditional Iceland high street stores and offer a wider range of goods including a much large range of frozen, chilled and grocery products along with a selection of premium lines."

It adds: "The stores very much have a warehouse type look and feel with wide shopping aisles, polished concrete floors, no ceilings and exposed services."

"The proposed store at Bescot Retail Park will build upon Iceland's existing food warehouse stores bringing the concept to residents of Walsall."

Iceland spokeswoman Laura Cad-dick said: "We are delighted to confirm that we have a new store opening planned in Walsall at Bescot Retail Park. We are unable to confirm the opening date as yet."

£10.6m hospital unit work to start

WORK on a £10.6 million care unit at Walsall Manor Hospital will start in May.

Funding has been released to allow the Integrated Critical Care Unit to be built. Bosses hope its introduction can help attract and retrain specialist staff, as well as push it out of special measures.

The £10.6m unit will bring together the Intensive Therapy Unit (ITU) and the High Dependency Unit (HDU) within the former West Wing main entrance. It will create an 18-bedded unit, an increase of five beds, and completion is scheduled for winter 2018.

Contracts are due to be signed on March 22 and construction will get under way in May.

Dumped rubbish cleared by council

BAGS dumped by fly-tippers in a Walsall lane have been cleared.

Walsall Council's Clean and Green teams cleared the rubbish thrown along Bridle Lane near Streetly last week.

Charity boxes snatched by thieves



CCTV footage shows the youths inside

HEARTLESS thieves stole six charity boxes containing hundreds of pounds after breaking into a private tuition centre.

CCTV footage shows the two youths inside the office room at Skittles Spotty Centre in Hatherton Street, Walsall.

One holds one of the charity boxes which were destined for Make A Wish, an organisation which gives children with life-limiting illness trips away.

The incident occurred at 2.30am on Friday on February 17.

Meetings had to be postponed for

a visit from the police before bosses could open in the afternoon. Damage was also caused to a computer and tablet.

Owner Annup Kapur, who had his briefcase taken, said: "It is disgusting. How these people can do this, not only to us, but also the charity we were collecting for. It has also taken its toll on the kids, they have been shaken up badly by what's gone on."

The youths broke in through a window. Security doors in the office stopped them gaining access elsewhere. The total cost of repairs is

estimated at around £2,000. A new alarm has also been fitted. Mr Kapur has shared the CCTV on social media in the hope the culprits are caught.

A West Midlands Police spokesman said: "Police were alerted to a burglary at Skittles Spotty Centre in Walsall."

"A total of six charity boxes were stolen from the property in Hatherton Street and damage was caused to a computer and tablet."

Anyone with information is asked to call police on 101, quoting 20WS/34855Q/17.

Conman warning after elderly lose thousands

A WARNING has been issued to people in Walsall about a bogus tradesman who has conned pensioners out of thousands of pounds.

Police have released details of the ongoing fraud, which sees the conman target elderly people living alone.

In one incident last week, an 89-year-old woman paid the crook hundreds of pounds for work he failed to start at her home in Greenside Way, Delves.

He had told her last Tuesday her drains needed to be cleared - but left later in the day having pocketed £420, with no work done.

Police have linked a series of similar incidents across Pheasey, Aldridge and Darlaston last month and another in Beechdale earlier this month.

In a statement West Midlands Police said: "Given the similarity of the offences it's possible that the same offender is involved. In this latest incident he has been described as a white man, around 5ft 6in tall, of large muscular build with a round, clean, shaven face, wearing dark coloured clothing and baseball cap."

Alone

"He spoke with a local accent and had most likely already singled out his target as he pulled onto her drive in a clean, white small van, possibly a Ford with the letters K and R in the registration number. Notably this man seems to be working alone."

"You can help protect your elderly and vulnerable neighbours by warning them to be suspicious of unexpected callers and remaining vigilant yourself. If you see anyone answering the description given above please contact the police immediately. We're sure many of you have cameras on your mobile phones - if you see anything suspicious and can do so without putting yourself at risk, think about taking some photos of those involved or their vehicle."

On Wednesday, January 25, the heartless fraudster is thought to have pocketed £500 after he told a pensioner in Jessie Road, Aldridge their fence was falling down and needed to be fixed.

Just a day after, a resident in Victory Avenue in Darlaston was conned out of £400 after being told their trees were blocking drains and that work needed to be carried out.

Each time, no work was done but money was taken. Anyone with information is urged to call police on 101.

May's day boosted by Mayor



Mayor of Walsall, Councillor Kath Phillips, with May Parry from Bloxwich, after her fundraising efforts

TOP fundraiser May Parry was heartbroken when the firm running an international beauty pageant in Disneyland Paris went bust. But her fund-raising has not gone unrewarded - Walsall mayor Kath Phillips has selected her as a finalist in her civic awards.

May, aged 11, had raised almost £5,000 for the Rainbow Foundation children's charity as an entrant in the Face Of the Globe pageant, representing England in the Paris final next month.

However the company organising the final - to be held over a week in London and Paris - went into liquidation. May not only suffered a crushing blow to her

competition hopes but her parents also lost £900 in travel and accommodation costs. Her mother Maria Parry, 41, said: "It was devastating for May and losing all that money as well, it was heart-breaking all round for us."

The pageant, open to girls aged five and upwards, was founded in 2012 by former beauty queen Lucie Hide, so entrants could 'experience the magic of feeling like a princess in Disneyland.'

However a message on the company's website announced 'with deep regret' that the firm had gone into voluntary liquidation after becoming insolvent.

Mrs Parry said: "It was hard

for May because she'd put so much into the competition. She was just so sad it's all stopped and she wouldn't get to wear the dress she'd spent hours searching for on the internet."

But now the Sheffield Academy student will wear the ivory and gold gown on April 21 for the mayor's civic awards after raising £1,900 for her charities. To raise the money, May held a teddy tombola at Bloxwich Carnival, a cake sale at NatWest Bank in Walsall and held a charity night at Wolfie's Bar in Great Wyrley.

Councillor Phillips said: "She's a lovely girl, not many 11-year-olds would do what she has."

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IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews



OK, so for cinematic just ready very boring

THE BBC's latest big-budget costume drama has attracted some controversy, with viewers reportedly switching off after 10 minutes because they could not understand the mumbling characters.

Well, I managed half an hour before switching off because it was very dull.

Perhaps I should have paid more attention to the previews, where the words "CGI" and "cinematic" seemed to figure heavily. I do wonder whether these words are a secret industry code for "very boring".

Whenever a programme or film is promoted on the basis of its computer-generated imagery, or CGI, it always seems to be far more about showing off the technical prowess than coming up with an entertaining story.

And cinematic just seems to be a euphemism for extremely slow. Endless shots of folk just standing around looking broody, or exchanging knowing glances at one another. Not actually doing anything, just looking like they might.

We can only speculate on what life might have been like in a Nazi-occupied Britain, but I really doubt it would have led to a notable increase in people going around glaring at one another, or moodily dragging on cigarettes in doorways before petulantly throwing the butt away.

The bloke I really blame for all this is Inspector Morse. Before he came along, detective dramas were slick, tightly edited, fast-paced and – exciting. Then when he came along it was all street scenes, random students walking about or riding bikes, with a bit of crime in between.

Maybe next time, somebody could come up with a drama that is a little bit less "cinematic", but a bit more entertaining?

□□□

A UNIVERSITY in Budapest has carried out research into people aged 18 to 24, and concluded that separating them for any length of time from their mobile phones resulted in symptoms akin to post-traumatic stress disorder.

Yep, you've read that right. There is a section of society which finds a few hours without being able to check their credit score or stare at a cute cat video as harmful to them as others do enduring some of the most unimaginable hardships in the battlefield.

The study found that three-quarters of those who took part showed signs of stress, including fidgeting and scratching. Of course, it would be wrong to tar all young people with the same brush, and we must remember how many of this generation have served their country with courage and dignity in Iraq and Afghanistan.

But the fact that millions are so attached to their electronic comfort blanket that they can't bear to be separated for a few hours is terrifying. Let's hope we never need to call them up for another war.

No Mr Blair, this time people did know how to vote



Lucy Brown who was asked for a cash donation after an uninspiring date



Tony Blair is calling for people to now change their mind over Brexit



Lord Newby says some peers do not have the 'stomach' to delay Brexit legislation

Thanks for advice Tony, now shove it

THIS is what His Serene Magnificence Tony Blair says about Britain voting to leave the EU: "The people voted without knowledge of the true terms of Brexit. As these terms become clear, it is their right to change their mind." Now, apply those same words to the 1975 referendum when Britain voted to stay in the Common Market. Back then, we certainly voted without knowledge of the true terms. We thought we were joining a free-trade area but were gradually swallowed into an undemocratic and unaccountable superstate. We had the right to change our mind and in last year's referendum we did so. The difference between the 1975 and 2016 referendums is that in 1975 we had no idea what the EU would become. Now we know exactly what it's about. So thanks for the advice, Tony, now shove off. Aren't you supposed to be bringing peace to the Middle East or something?

LORD Newby says some peers do not have the 'stomach' to delay the Government's Brexit legislation. Stomach? I suspect what's missing is a little lower in the anatomy. The House of Lords knows that if it frustrates the will of the people, then the people might start asking why we need 850 Lords in the first place. Might things be greatly improved by having 100, 50, or none at all?

A READER says he likes the term "de-extincting," as applied to woolly mammoths, and wonders what other things might be de-extincted. He suggests good manners, respect for elders and Beer at Home means Davenport. Any other suggestions for the de-extinction list?

INCIDENTALLY, good luck with de-extincting respect for elders. The snag is that it has probably never existed. Who was it who said: "The children now love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority; they show dis-

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



respect for elders and love chatter in place of exercise"? It was Socrates, writing about 2,500 years ago. No change there.

THINGS to do on a rainy day. The Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford has a folklore exhibition featuring "a collection of objects highlighting folk traditions of Oxfordshire including a Morris dancer's outfit, whit horns, lighting appliances and a lace maker's dick pot."

A READER asks whether I have any strong views of the Church of England's latest furore over same-sex marriages. Not really. It is hard to get worked up about the opinions of people who believe, without any evidence, that some benevolent sky-god is watching over us. I don't really care what superstitious people think about God, the Devil and heaven and hell, so why should I fret about their views on genitalia? As far as we can tell, the Church of England is morphing into a social club for people who just want to be sweet to each other, with none of that nasty, old-fashioned stuff about sin. More than 20 years ago I forecast the creation of the Church of Jesus Christ The Really Nice Bloke. I am sure it has a great future.

AN Appeal Court ruling this week suggests the law may soon permit civil partnerships, currently restricted to same-sex couples, for heterosexual couples, too. But could the whole process be overtaken by the astonishing rise of gender rights? There is growing pressure for people to be able to "self-identify" their gender. Lawmakers in California have proposed a

"non-binary" choice for people who wish to be neither male nor female on official documents including birth certificates and driving licences. In a world where people can be any gender they choose, or none, any couple could qualify for a civil partnership simply by claiming to be the same sex.

MEANWHILE, one US university already offers a choice of six gender identities for new students: male, female, trans male/trans man, trans female/trans woman, gender queer/gender non-conforming and "different identity". Confused? It has hardly started. An online guide offers no fewer than 81 definitions of sexual possibilities and gender-identity issues. Something for everyone?

THANKS for your continuing accounts of truly awful first dates. A reader tells me of an over-confident lad who took his girlfriend on a hot-air balloon flight and romantically proposed to her at 2,000 feet. She turned him down. They were stuck in that balloon basket for the next 45 minutes with the pilot and by the time it landed the mood on board was positively polar. Moral: always plan your escape route.

LUCY Brown, a London-based clothes designer, had an uninspiring date through an online dating agency. She decided to let the man down gently with a text explaining she was not interested in a second meeting. She was astonished when the 'normal and sweet' man replied saying he was devastated and asking for 'a contribution for the drinks I spent on you'. She sent him £42.50 and made an equal donation to a donkey sanctuary. And they say romance is dead.

A READER writes: "I purchased a hanging basket of spring flowers this weekend. The instructions say: Keep out of draughts."

TALKING POINT



Don't judge people by the way they look

I HAVE never really been a follower of fashion, as people who know me will testify. I wear what I feel comfortable in and cannot see the point of paying £50 for shoes or trousers when pairs for £10 or £20 do the same job, particularly as we are meant to be living in times of austerity.

That does not mean I don't care about my appearance. And, of course I have no problem with people wishing to pay over the odds if that's what they want. That's their prerogative, and if they can afford it, why not?

But remember, a trend is just that. Weeks/months down the line, everyone will be wearing something different.

Take holey jeans, for example. What are those all about? During a weekend away, I saw hordes of youngsters wearing these.

It was ironic there was a town nearby called Patcham – the sort of thing my mum would have done if I had worn holey jeans!

While on the same break I was served in one shop by a girl with hair of so many colours she looked like she had bathed in a vat of Skittles – and could have been the inspiration for a McFly hit. And she had so many facial piercings it was like talking to a pin cushion.

But joking aside (and I really am) it is these kind of attitudes and prejudices we need to stamp out.

So often we hear of girls pressured into being a certain size, or bullies hiding behind social media anonymity, all because their targets have different looks or tastes or beliefs to that of their own.

The shop girl I encountered was most helpful and pleasant, as one would expect.

Isn't it time we looked beyond people's appearances, be it tattoos, dress sense, size or whatever it may be? Let them be comfortable in their own skin. The old adages of 'each to their own' and 'leave people be' spring to mind.

We cannot expect everyone to look or dress identically, follow the same football teams or be fans of the same kind of music, television programme or comedian, for example. Variety is the spice of life, they say, and the world is richer for it.

Some people like, and are even turned on by, body art, for instance. And, while that may be not be my cup of tea, it does not mean I would have any less time for anyone with a scorpion inked on their back or some obscure Hebrew inscription on their arm.

Employers take note. I'm sure many job opportunities go begging because a candidate does not look the part, or has gaping holes in their ear lobes. It doesn't necessarily mean they cannot do the jobs.

Don't be intimidated or put off by these people, they are human beings after all. Oh, and they have feelings too.

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Marching on towards the Brexit door

GINA Miller, remember her? As she and her campaign to derail Britain's EU unshackling recedes even further into distant memory we can all look forward to the public's will finally being honoured in little more than a month's time.

The aching doubts caused by both court rulings in favour of Parliament's right to sanction our departure from the EU have now been put to bed thanks to the safe passage of the Government's EU (notification of withdrawal) Bill, secured with 494 votes to 122. Some 54 Labour rebels and the SNP accounted for the majority of dissenters. Of course, the many Lib Dem

and Labour peers still occupying the House of Lords will have something to say, but talk is cheap and there is no greater force in British politics than our onward march to the Brexit door. Nowhere is the implausibility of Britain remaining in the EU beyond 2019 clearer than in the madness of recent remainer behaviour.

Scottish Nationalist MPs provoked bafflement in the Commons as they whistled the EU's anthem and leave. EU founder Arron Banks found himself under a barrage of Cadbury's Creme Eggs at a UKIP rally in Stoke. He saw the funny side, scoffing one of the eggs. One person bereft of humour, and all

his other senses, we suspect is Speaker of the House of Commons John Bercow who called for President Trump to be barred from addressing Parliament, a breach of his remit to say the least.

Mr Bercow may have scored some easy points with adoring liberals, but in case he had not noticed, Britain is in the process of restoring its relationship with her closest ally. This grand gesture, serves only to undermine Britain's strategic position. Which side is he playing on? Whatever it is, it won't be conducted from the speaker's chair for much longer.

ALAN DAVIS
Darlaston

Check your till receipts

MAY I spring to the defence of Tesco, following the recent revelations concerning its offer pricing by the BBC.

Readers have probably experienced the attitude of store assistants in other countries, where their surliness would turn milk sour.

In contrast, the staff at my local Tesco store (Walsall Extra) – or any shop in the UK, is the complete opposite. In the event that an item is no longer on offer but the promotion sticker has not been removed, Tesco will honour the offer and in fact double the refund.

The moral of the Inside Story 'undercover' investigation is that everyone should check their receipts. If they don't and there is a discrepancy, they will pay the price, so to speak. Supermarkets are run by human beings and all are fallible, even BBC journalists.

E M WALTON
Walsall

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Walsall Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

EMAIL

walsall.chron@expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Leisure centres are dragging us down

RE: Healthy cash aid at centres (February 23).

Once again Walsall Council (of the chamber, not the stalwarts working at the civic centre) are trying to justify the albatross around the council's neck of leisure centres, which have now been renamed fitness centres.

As ornithologists will know, the albatross has a 12ft wingspan that the 'ancient mariner' couldn't even walk with. No use saying 'unhand me sir' – you are collectively, in the vernacular, truly hooked.

By the time you have paid staff wages (not WMBC employees by the way) running costs and the mortgage, you still face an inevitable eviction for borrowed money.

GRAEME CONNIGALE
Palfrey

Go wild to help butterflies

I READ last week that we are losing our city dwelling butterflies. If you want butterflies in the garden try having a wild patch containing nettles, thistles, perhaps some brambles and of course buddleia.

You could scrounge some windfall apples and drop them around your wild patch.

Some butterflies will hibernate in the shed so try putting a three-sided long box inside the shed that is accessible from the outside through two inch wire netting. If you don't get butterflies you might get small birds.

ROGER WATTS
Walsall

Tories are left with free hand

WHERE do I go from here? When I was old enough to vote, I was guided by my parents' politics, until I formed my own views and decided I was Labour through and through. I am now 67 and I am in limbo.

I can't vote Conservative, my conscience won't allow me, I'll be damned if I vote UKIP, their policies being too extreme.

It's a waste of a vote to elect a minority party. So, we are back with Labour – whose leader who has let down voters of my age group.

He is someone who disagrees with controlling immigration to the very minimum and (probably why a 'no vote' was achieved in the referendum).

Also, he is a person who, if he became Prime Minister, would not use a nuclear deterrent as a last resort. He seems to have gathered a nucleus of like-minded supporters around him and split the Party in two.

This leaves the Conservatives with a free hand and I can't see when I will use my vote again.

Shame on you Mr Corbyn, from a disenchanted, lifelong, Labour supporter.

MR R WARDLAW
Walsall

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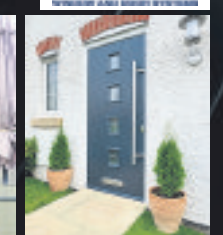
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Aspiring trader sees his market hopes stall

A DISABLED student says he has been refused the chance to run a fruit and veg stall on Walsall Market by the council – though he claims there are empty stalls.

Naresh Kumar has complained to the council amid fears he may be being discriminated against.

The 31-year-old, from West Bromwich, suffers from cerebral palsy and walks with crutches.

He said: "When I contacted the council department in charge of the market they said that all the stalls are full. But whenever I am in the town they are empty."

"They tell me that I will need to go on a waiting list, but I don't understand why. I fear that this may be discrimination. If I don't get a response soon then I will seek legal advice too."

Benefits

Mr Kumar, who is currently studying at college, said: "I want to get off benefits and earn my own money and I feel that this could be something that would help me for the future too."

"I want to make something out of my life and I know that I have my family's backing as well. I just want to get into work but it's difficult for me."

The market operates in the town centre every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday and trades between 8.30am and 5.00pm. It comprises around 68 stalls.

The council said there were no vacancies for an additional fruit and veg stall and that Mr Kumar had been offered, and refused, a stall at Willenhall Market, as well as the chance to sell other goods.

A statement said: "We are aware some stalls are empty but this is due to recent bad weather and annual leave."



Naresh Kumar, who suffers from cerebral palsy, wants to run a fruit and veg stall

Decision soon on hall plan

COUNCIL bosses have said they expect a decision over a controversial development planned for Great Barr Hall to be made soon.

A bid to turn the 18th century mansion into a wedding venue and build 57 homes in its grounds was first lodged in 2013, but stalled after objections from politicians and campaigners.

Now Historic England has told applicant BCG Lakes it would not support the development as it believed it could ruin the Grade II-listed building.

Walsall Council says a decision date is drawing nearer and is waiting to hear back from the applicant.

Spokesman Sophia French said: "Walsall Council recently received Historic England's comments on the planning and listed building consent applications and these have been sent to the applicant for consideration."

"The council awaits the applicant's response on matters raised before progressing the application to determination."

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Diver pops into sea to find rare bottle



Graham Payne, who recovered a rare lemonade bottle, more than 200 years old, from the bottom of the river

A HISTORIAN and scuba diver found a 200-year-old lemonade bottle five metres deep in the River Severn.

Graham Payne, aged 69, from Birchills, Walsall, discovered the rare round-bottomed bottle from the bottom of the river, between the English and Welsh bridge. From research he discovered it was made in Shrewsbury.

Mr Payne believes it may be of some financial value to a collector but plans to keep it for himself.

He said: "It is a real one of a kind, hand crafted and made long before they started to make bottles with a flat bottom.

"Who knows how it got there? I brought it back up and is still in good condition, so since then I have been trying to find out more."

Mr Payne said: "It is really unique, even in scuba diving, where you are finding things all the time. I have been scuba diving for around 30 years now and I have found lots in my time, mainly ammunition, but nothing like this."

Mr Payne has previously helped dozens of people find out more about their parents, estranged relatives and family members who were involved in the First and Second World Wars. Previous research has taken him to Ypres in Belgium to find the graves of fallen soldiers who died there in 1915.

Legion is asked to help pay for parades

THE ROYAL British Legion is being asked to help pay for under threat Remembrance Day parades across Walsall.

Parade organisers say the charity should help pay for traffic management costs, after police withdrew officers last year.

A cross-party Remembrance Day Parades Working Group has asked cash-strapped Walsall Council to help fund the costs for a second year running. But Councillor Carl Creaney, who served 18 years in the Army, says the charity should also help to provide a portion of the fees.

Appeal

Councillor Creaney, a member of the RBL Willenhall South branch, said: "The Royal British Legion, at national level, has stated they are only interested in the money we raise from the Poppy Appeal.

"They say parades are nothing to do with us. I think it is a disgrace. Our local branch raised around £18,000 to £20,000 last time for the Poppy Appeal. If the RBL gave us just one per cent of that, it would help us out greatly."

The working group has also demanded Walsall Council chips in more money to fund the traffic management costs.

Last year the authority paid up to £1,000 for each parade taking place, which was around 30 per cent for the overall traffic management costs. But the group is now asking the authority to pay £1,500 each parade, which totals around 50 per cent of the overall costs.

Ten parades are held across Walsall every year including one through the town centre, Willenhall, Darlaston, Brownhills, Bloxwich, Aldridge, Pelsall, Short Heath, Streetly and Walsall Wood.

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10 Mayor hops along to see exhibition

The Chronicle Thursday, March 2, 2017

THE Mayor of Walsall took to a space hopper to enjoy an exhibition showing the evolution of the borough over the last 125 years.

Councillor Kath Phillips opened Scenes of Walsall at the town centre's New Art Gallery and enjoyed a vintage tea party, music and games providing extra entertainment.

Contemporary photos and a lithograph of the town's High Street as it looked in 1845 are two of the pieces on display.

It will be open until the summer, with the closing date set as July 16.

The gallery also wants the public to contribute to the collection. New Art Gallery spokesman Chris Wilkinson said: "Many scenes of Walsall have been collected since the establishment of Walsall's public art collection in 1892.

"In this exhibition, to help celebrate the Permanent Collection's 125th birthday, a range of these are on display, from a lithograph of Walsall High Street in 1845 to contemporary photography.

"We would love local families to participate by adding their memories of these places to the display and by creating their own Scenes of Walsall to be added to a virtual online exhibition.

"We have worked closely with local Community Interest Company Mindful Gifts, based in Darlaston, on creating an immersive and interactive space, with objects chosen to bring the works of art to life."



Mayor of Walsall, Councillor Kath Phillips tries out the space hopper

Six-year stretch for robber with knuckleduster

A ROBBER who smashed a shopkeeper in the face with a knuckleduster as the victim was shutting his store for the night has been jailed for six years.

Stephen Roberts was loading boxes of goods into his van outside Touch-down Vapes in Clarkes Lane, Willenhall when Oliver Stanton struck, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

The businessman was taking his stock home at the close of business because he feared the store could be burgled overnight, said Mr Antonio Muller, prosecuting.

The 21-year-old attacker, who had his hood pulled up and a scarf covering his face, walked up to Mr Roberts, who was about to put a £200 box of vaping accessories into his vehicle, and announced: 'I'm having that.'

The startled shopkeeper replied: 'You are joking, aren't you?' "Sadly he was wrong," Mr Muller added. Stanton punched him

twice in the face, took the box and ran off but the scarf fell off during the fracas allowing Mr Roberts to see both the attacker's face and the knuckleduster on his right fist.

The victim's daughter put out a plea on Facebook for help in tracking down the culprit and received a response suggesting it could have been Ollie Stanton.

Bruised

Badly bruised Mr Roberts took one look at his profile picture and knew it was the right man.

The defendant, of no fixed address, who had 23 previous convictions involving 46 separate offences, was arrested and interviewed nine days after the robbery which took place at 6pm on January 12. He pleaded guilty to robbery and possession of an offensive weapon.

Mr Christopher O'Gorman, defending, said: "There was some planning but this was not a sophisticated robbery."

Fisherman caught with no licence

AN angler from Walsall was handed a £567 fine for fishing illegally.

Ricky Fisher, of Millfield Road, Brownhills, pleaded guilty to fishing without a rod licence after being caught at Pillaton Pools, Penkridge, in July last year by patrolling officers from the Environment Agency.

At North Staffordshire Justice Centre Magistrates' Court on February 20, Fisher was fined £400 and ordered to pay costs of £127 and a victim surcharge of £40. Fines totalling £5,680 were issued to eight illegal anglers, including Carl Johnson of Cowlshaw Way in Rugeley.

They were all found guilty under Section 27(1)(a) of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975.

Magistrates heard that on three separate days last June and July Environment Agency enforcement officers found them fishing without a licence at pools in Stoke on Trent, Rugeley, Eccleshall and Penkridge.



Don't ignore the warning signs.

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Call to save mental health centre lined up for closure

TWO women are calling for a mental health centre in Walsall to be saved after it was rubber-stamped for closure.

The Broadway North Recovery College, which supports people with mental health issues, is set to close after Walsall Council cabinet approved the ceasing of the service earlier this month.

The centre's closure will save the council £75,000 in 2017/18 and £78,000 in 2018/19, while support will be given to service users to help set up their own support group.

But Wendy Richards and Melanie Powell, aged 49, who are both members of campaign group Walsall Against Cuts, believe the borough will face severe problems if

mental health funding is cut in the borough.

Mrs Richards, aged 48, originally from Solihull, said: "If you take the recovery college away from people who are unwell it's going to isolate them and make them feel more unwell. This place gives them help. The centre saved my life and I was so suicidal."

"The college offers all sorts of classes from Monday to Friday. The facility is very important, it's a lifeline for people. I came here for a crisis bed in 2010, they helped me and kept me alive and did their job."

In 2015, a petition with more than 1,000 signatures was launched in an attempt to

keep it open. Councillor Rose Martin originally spearheaded the campaign to keep the centre open and also campaigned for improved health provision in the area.

Mrs Powell, aged 49, from Aldridge, added: "I came here 15-years-ago on a crisis bed. It saved my life and gave me my confidence back and a sense of motivation."

"What's happening today in mental health is disgraceful - they're threatening our day centre now and closing it will make people even more anxious and depressed."

Paula Furnival, the council's executive director for adult social care added: "We have had to make some difficult decisions on how our services can be delivered."



Melanie Powell and Wendy Richards at the Broadway North Centre

Reports of gunshots fired at car

POLICE were called to reports of gunshots being fired at a car in the Black Country.

West Midlands Police were called to the scene in Temple Road, Willenhall, at around 1.20am, last Thursday. But the force confirmed that no-one had been seriously injured and were urging anyone with any information to come forward.

It is the fourth shooting to happen in the Walsall borough over the past four months. Anyone who can help should call 101.

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An individualised learning model is adopted and has proven results

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Apple core reason for Ivy turning 100



An apple a day has been the secret to a long life for Ivy Boot, who has celebrated her 100th birthday in Walsall

AN apple a day keeps the doctor away – that is the motto of a former housekeeper from Walsall who has celebrated her 100th birthday.

Ivy Boot – who had three children with late husband Frank – received a card from the Queen for her big day on February 22. Ivy, who has eight grandchildren and eight great grandchildren, still lives at home and is regularly visited by two of her sons, Ray and Robert. Her eldest son, Frank Jr died.

“She was born in Cheslyn Hay and would have moved to Walsall shortly after leaving school, when she was around 14 or 15,” said Robert.

“She left school and worked for her dad who had a small-holding. She then worked for a firm called Ballinger and Dean, a printing company, as a housekeeper.”

Earning around 97p a week, she started out there aged 18 and left at 24 – her age when she married on July 14, 1941. That was her last job.

“Her career was very short,” added Robert. “She worked until she got married and then was a housewife.”

“She still lives at home. She doesn’t go out but she gets about the house and her mind is as sharp as can be.”

HomeServe link-up is a help to homeless

A PROJECT backed by HomeServe, helping to feed thousands of homeless and vulnerable people in the West Midlands, is going from strength to strength two years on.

The partnership between the Walsall-based home assistance provider and the Midland Langar Seva Society (MLSS) has celebrated its second year.

Since then, hundreds of HomeServe people, all volunteers, have joined the MLSS teams to help provide the service to thousands of homeless people and others in need of short-term support to help feed their families.

Meals

In its two years, the volunteers have helped to provide more than 17,000 hot meals, prepared more than 17,000 goody bags which are given out at the open kitchens and have helped purchase more than 16,000 samosas for evening feeds.

Collectively, HomeServe staff have volunteered more than 1,000 hours to help serve the food and last year, HomeServe donated one of its vans to help volunteers transport essential food

and clothing. The unique partnership was sparked off thanks to a chance conversation between HomeServe call centre worker Bhupinder “Pops” Heer and chief marketing officer Greg Reed.

The MLSS helps “all and everyone” in need of food across Walsall, Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Coventry and Leicester. Pops said: “I’ve been blown away by the way everyone at HomeServe has got behind MLSS and it makes me incredibly proud to have them by our side.”

The MLSS team operates in wider networks right across the West Midlands and beyond and delivers around 10,000 feeds a week.

By Simon Penfold

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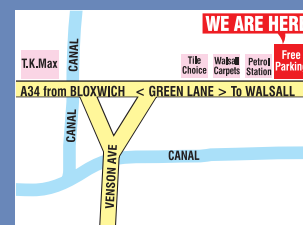
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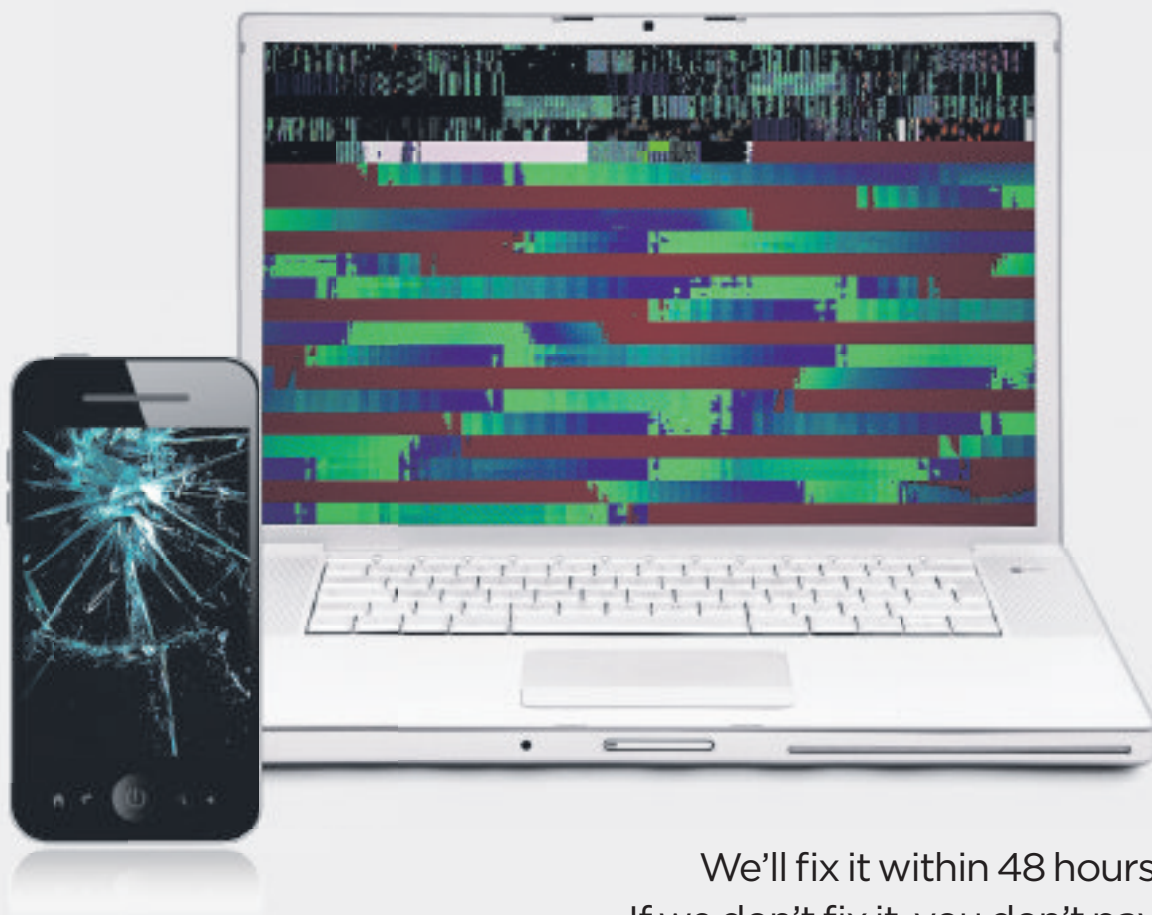
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No riots, just Ricky in pink ripping it up

Kaiser Chiefs
Barclaycard Arena
By Diane Davies

ONCE they were the Angry Mob, a riot predicted in every headline. Everything else seemed average and they loved us less and less every day.

But there were no angry young men in sight as Kaiser Chiefs hit the stage at Birmingham's Barclaycard Arena in a scene reminiscent of Phoenix Nights.

With the glitter balls, sparkling ribbon backdrop and K C balloons all that was missing was Peter Kay. But these are the Kaiser Chiefs, this is their arena tour and no-one knows how to put on a show better than frontman Ricky Wilson - he does not do 'relaxed'.

It is 100 per cent energy from Ricky the moment the band hit the stage and after the first number the 'social club scene' makes way for the big Kaiser Chiefs show. A huge neon K and a C lit up the stage with a backdrop of large electronic screens, while smoke belled out amid an impressive lights show.

They opened with We Stay Together, one of the better tracks from the fairly tepid new album, their sixth, Stay Together.

But the heat was quickly turned up as they then ripped into the favourite Everything is Average Nowadays. Personally, I thought the last album Education, Education, Education and War was their best work for years and arguably at least as good as Employment which provided the 'classic' hits. Stay Together is a 'nice' album, it certainly shows their versatility but is far less edgy. However, the one thing you can guarantee from the Kaiser Chiefs is an irresistibly catchy tune and usually a snappy chorus. Singles Parachute and Hole in My Soul are perfect examples of these and fitted in perfectly with the energy of the show, keeping the crowd



In the pink - Ricky Wilson on stage at the Barclaycard Arena in Birmingham

bouncing and singing away merrily.

A Kaiser Chiefs gig is one great sing-along. The whole set was peppered throughout with hits including Everyday I Love You Less and Less, Ruby, Modern Way, Never Miss a Beat, The

Angry Mob, I Predict a Riot and Coming Home.

The encore saw a gutsy rendition of Ever Fallen in Love by the Buzzcocks and, of course, the obligatory Oh My God.



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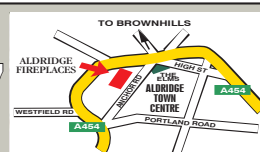


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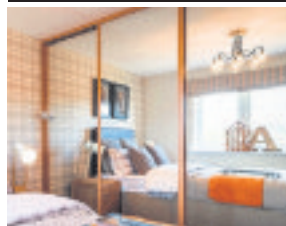
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NATIONAL HOLIDAYS

Very revealing!

THE long-awaited announcement of the line-up for this year's V Festival was revealed this week - with Pink and Jay Z the surprise big headliners.

Rumours had been rife for weeks ahead of the announcement with the smart money seemingly on Ed Sheeran as the likely big draw, writes Diane Davies.

Meanwhile Drake, Kaiser Chiefs, Mumford and Sons and Mary J Blige had also been touted as possible headliners by the music press.

Both Jay Z and Pink have been fairly low profile in recent years musically. Raunchy American singer Pink has not had a solo album out since 2012 and not toured since 2013/14.

It is 10 years since Pink made her debut V appearance. Festival promoters say the 'pop icon will be entertaining the crowd with her elaborate stagecraft and choreography'.

Teens

With more than 100 million records sold and a 20-year career, Jay Z is one of the best-selling musicians of all time. Although the US rapper is almost better known as Mr Beyonce for young music fans having not had a solo album out for almost four years. The 47-year-old has not toured since 2013/14.

He and wife Beyonce recently announced that she is pregnant with twins but have not revealed her due date - though it is rumoured to be around the beginning of August.

The V Festival takes place at West-on Park in Staffordshire and Hylands Park, Chelmsford, on August 19 and 20. Having gained a reputation in recent years as a festival focusing on the 'teen scene', last year's headliners were Justin Bieber and Rihanna, there are a number of acts which will satisfy the usual crowd.

'Godfather of garage' Craig David,



Rapper Jay Z who will be headlining this year's festival



Pink performs at Birmingham's LG Arena on her last tour

Jason Derulo, Jess Glynne, local lads The Vamps, Sean Paul, Dizzee Rascal, Clean Bandit, James Arthur and rising sensation Stormzy have all been announced this week. Ellie Goulding will be making her fifth V appearance and there is a return for Rudimental.

Scouting for Girls and Busted tick the 'guitar band' box while Madness always provide a lively show and will appease the more mature members of the crowd.

Pete Tong was the first name released by the organisers, last Friday,

as a sneak tease to the big reveal this week. Tong is one of the most successful electronic dance DJs worldwide and will be creating the sound of summer to both sites with his Ibiza Classics orchestra show. Tickets for V go on general sale at 9am on Friday. A weekend ticket will cost £175 plus fees.

As well as day and weekend tickets there are camping tickets - including VIP and 'glamping' options. A 'pod pad' sleeping two people costs £1,366 while an Airstream Prince Trailer for five will set visitors

back £6,500. This does include access to the VIP area though.

Around 70,000 attended last year's V Festival. Headliner Justin Bieber found himself making all the wrong headlines over the weekend with claims that he was miming and had been out partying to the early hours.

● What do you think of the line-up. Email us at wolverhampton.chronicles@expressandstar.co.uk or write to Chronicle Editorial, 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

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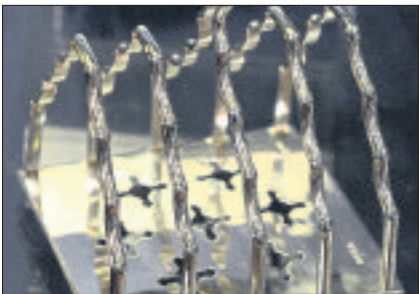
Factory workers line up for a staff photograph circa 1978



A factory worker with a host of teapots



This picture of Charlie Teppin polishing a pot features in the exhibition



The world's first stainless steel toast rack



A sponge and soap holder featuring in the display

Steeling the limelight in museum exhibition

WORLD famous Bloxwich manufacturer Old Hall will be celebrated in a new exhibition opening at Walsall Leather Museum.

Old Hall was the world's first manufacturer of stainless steel tableware.

The firm originated in 1893 as Messrs J and J Wiggin, producers of horse bits and stirrups, and operated from the Salvation Army's old hall in Revival Street, Bloxwich – which is how the company name derived.

After the First World War, the market for horse equipment fell away and the firm looked to diversify.

In 1928, William Wiggin created a stainless steel toast rack, followed in 1930 by the world's first stainless steel teapot.

The business grew steadily and after the Second World War, orders for stainless steel tableware came

MEMORY LANE

By Tom Oakley

flooding in from around the globe.

The company had become a major local employer with a workforce of more than 500 people.

Councillor Julie Fitzpatrick, portfolio holder for community, leisure and culture at Walsall Council, said: "This exhibition will be a celebration of local ingenuity, craftsmanship and excellence."

"Old Hall was a world leader in its field. The company's products are highly regarded and feature in the collections of many of the world's leading design museums, such as the V & A in London and the Metropolitan Museum in New York."

Regular users of King George V playing fields in Bloxwich will recognise the name of William Wiggin – the road leading into the park from Stafford Road is named

after him. The free exhibition will feature in excess of 100 designs showing the huge range of items made by Old Hall between 1928 and 1984, from the first toast rack to the celebrated Alveston teapot, popularly known as the 'Aladdin's lamp'.

There will be a number of unique pieces which never went into production, and photos and ephemera reflecting the long history of the company and its role as a major local employer.

Chairman

The exhibition opened on February 8. On February 11, Nigel Wiggin, great-grandson of the company's founder and chairman of the Old Hall Collectors Club, was at the museum between 11am and 3pm to meet visitors and help with identification queries. The display will run until April 29.

For video footage, see expressandstar.com



Mike Glasson with part of a Balmoral tea set produced by Old Hall

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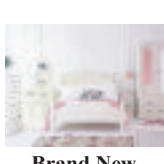
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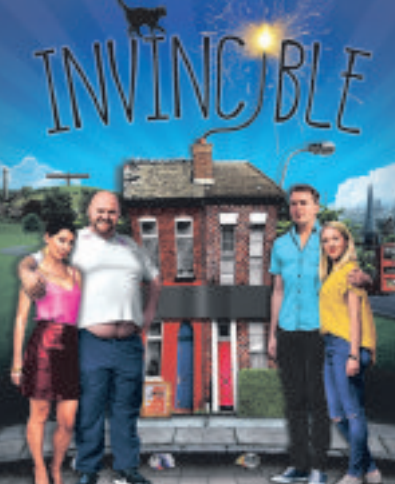
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The Chronicle Thursday, March 2, 2017

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Robbie's a pal but I still see old mates

He's so God Damned nice. Talking to Olly Murs is like talking to the ultimate cheeky chap. There's no edge and nothing unpleasant.

He's as unlikely to throw a strop as Mother Teresa, he's as unlikely to be caught with his pants down as the local lollipop lady. He's the antithesis of Kanye and Kardashian, the polar opposite of Katie Hopkins. He's as unlikely to demand a jar full of purple Smarties on his backstage rider as a lion is to marry a dolphin.

Good God, Olly, stop being so flippin' nice. And yet that's what the public admires about him. While so many who are thrust into the spotlight are dysfunctional and difficult, Olly is precisely the opposite. He is the archetypal boy-who-done-well, the classic boy next door who made it big.

Olly was working as a recruitment consultant at Prime Appointments, in Witham, before he featured on The X Factor. And he's still in touch with his old officemates now. The closest he'd come to stardom was appearing on Deal or No Deal in 2007. He wasn't much cop, taking home a tenner after messing up royally.

Like many kids, he'd dreamed of hitting the big time. But after forming a band, The Small Town Beggars, that got nowhere fast, he pretty much gave up. And so, after his Deal or No Deal experience, he jacked it all in and went backpacking around Australia. Then, when he returned, he decided to have one last crack at fame. He rolled the dice in 2009 and is landed on X.

LUCK

"X Factor got me started, but I think for me it's just about hard work. I respect people and I'm nice to people and I've also had a bit of luck. People like my music and have bought into me so I try to give people a different sound and a different vibe. It's just been a great journey. I've been very lucky. I hate to say luck because we all know it isn't all luck. You've got to have a bit of talent."

Olly was the runner-up on the sixth series of The X Factor in 2009. His debut single, Please Don't Let Me Go, debuted at number one while his debut album was certified double platinum after shifting more than 600,000 copies. And since then, it's been one-way traffic. Olly has been moving higher and higher and higher as he's shipped a colossal 10 million records, published an autobiography called Happy Days and released three further albums which have all gone to number one and achieved between two and four platinum discs for sales that have hovered around one-million-per-record. The only thing he hasn't done is fill his mantelpiece with awards. Olly has been nominated for six Brits and two Ivor Novellos, but always been pipped. Still, there's still time to put that right, especially with the release of his fifth album, 24 hrs.

"I think it's the best thing I've done, yes. It's certainly my best songwriting. I wrote it with some great writers and as a body of work it's the best thing I've come up with. Right now, I'm just looking forward to the fans listening to it."

"When you've done four albums, it's like what am I going to do for my fifth? Where do I go? So what I've always done in my career is try to move forward."

The new album will be accompanied by another megatron tour. Having stayed on the road from March to August with his last set of arena shows, for Never Been Better, which included three dates at Birmingham's Barclaycard Arena, Olly is back for more. This time he'll be playing the city's Genting. At

Olly loves the high life but he's Mur likely to be found in Essex



present, he's scheduled just the one date, for March 24, but don't bet against him returning for more.

"I'm looking forward to it," he says. "To do these sort of venues is fantastic and I never get bored of it. I always hope that one day I'll move up and play stadiums. That's certainly on my bucket list."

He's learned from the best in the business. Olly was part of One Direction's Up All Night Tour in 2012, when he joined the boys in the USA. And he was also the special guest for Robbie Williams' Take The Crown Tour, in 2013, which earned \$20 million from nine shows and included four sell-out gigs at Wembley and the same number at Manchester's Etihad Stadium.

"Working with people like Robbie Williams and Gary Barlow has been great. It's always good to work with people like that and get close, to see those guys going about their work. I'm grateful to them for giving me the opportunity to play on their tours."

"Hopefully one day there'll be a young singer on one of my tours and I'll try to guide them and give them advice and help"

Not that Olly takes his success for granted. In the fickle world of pop, he knows that what goes up must come down. Though a crash is more unlikely that a bad dinner from Gordon Ramsay, he knows it might not last forever.

"I'm not a fool. I know that at some point it'll all be gone. But then it might not – who knows it might go on for the rest of my life. I'll continue for as long as my fans in the UK want me to. If I move into other careers, like TV or radio, that would be cool. You

*You've got to tick
all the boxes really
if you want to get
somewhere*

don't know, the opportunities are endless."

For a cheeky happy like Olly, they probably are. He's the sort of entertainer who'll still be around in 20 years.

The Nice theme continues when he's not on pop star duty. Away from the stage, he's a right regular philanthropist who supports his local Brainwave charity, which is based in his home town and helps kids with cerebral palsy.

"Giving back is massively important to me. When you're in the position I'm in where your profile can really elevate some charities then you can use that to raise money and help families and kids in need. I'm in the position to do that and I love helping, I love doing that. The charities that I'm involved in are all important to me."

With enough in the bank to live comfortably, Olly could slow down. He could swan off to some exotic isle and sip vodka, lychee juice and vermouth or mango daiquiris. Not that he does. When he's off duty, you're more likely to find him knocking about in Essex, where he still hangs out with his old mates. Olly may have Robbie Williams' number on speed dial, but he's just as likely to text his mates, Colin and Robbie, instead.

"I'm always at home in Essex. I'm always visiting my old employees, especially an agency I used to work for, Prime Appointments."

● Olly is performing at The Genting Arena, Birmingham on Thursday, March 23, Friday, March 24 and Saturday, March 25. Tickets cost from £33.99. Visit www.theticketfactory.com or call 0844 33 88 222.

Andy Richardson



Annette – no stranger to city



Annette boings back – to star in Billy Elliot

It'll be like a home from home when Annette McLaughlin lands in Birmingham to star in a six-week run of Billy Elliot.

The actress and comedian once spent every other weekend near the city, commuting from London with her then-boyfriend, Frank Skinner, to watch the Albion. Boing Boing, does that make her a Born Again Baggie. "Oh God, no. I was just a very, very good girlfriend."

Instead of the blue-and-white-stripes, her abiding memory is of the half time pies.

The West End star, who plays Mrs Wilkinson in Billy Elliot, the role made famous in the movie by Julie Walters, worked with Skinner on TV's The Frank Skinner Show.

"Frank was my boyfriend and I used to go and watch West Brom with him," she says. "I enjoy football because I had three brothers and used to enjoy

playing it as a kid. I used to go every Saturday with Frank and I loved it. I loved the pies most of all, that was my favourite thing. The gravy used to drip down my hands. They were delicious.

"We only used to go up for the weekend but it was great because he was such a massive fan of West Brom and was so proud of his heritage."

Heritage is a dominant theme in Billy Elliot. It celebrates life in a northern mining town. Set against the background of the 1980s miners' strike it follows Billy's journey from boxing to ballet class, where he discovers a passion for dance that changes his life forever.

Sharing the role of Billy are Adam Abbou, Matthew Lyons, Haydn May and local boy Lewis Smallman, from West Bromwich. The show runs at Birmingham Hippodrome from Tuesday until April 29

Bach to Hendrix at Kennedy gala



World-renowned violinist Nigel Kennedy will make a triumphant return to his adopted home city of Birmingham with a gala celebration show at Symphony Hall.

The maverick Aston Villa-loving violinist will combine his greatest successes and new works for this one-off performance on Saturday, March 11.

Kennedy will perform a wide-ranging repertoire from Bach to Hendrix, world music to jazz, accompanied by a host of special guests including Bulgarian composer and virtuoso on the gadulka (stringed folk instrument)

Georgi Andreev and world-class violinists Jean-Luc Ponty, Michael Guttman and Pieter Daniel.

Kennedy's unique talent and extraordinary ability to communicate with audiences have made him one of the world's most popular performers.

Jean-Luc Ponty is a master of the violin in the arena of jazz and rock. He is widely regarded as an innovator.

Despite their different musical backgrounds, Kennedy and Ponty had the same mentor – Stéphane Grappelli, who saw in them the renewal of the violin. The encounter between these two exceptional artists promises to be powerfully creative. It will range from the acoustic to the electronic and with

a repertoire drawn from the last three centuries.

Georgi Andreev is a virtuoso of the gadulka, a traditional Bulgarian bowstring instrument. Michael Guttman is an eminent violin soloist, conductor and music director of festivals around the world.

At the age of 10 he became the youngest student ever to be admitted into the Brussels Royal Conservatory of Music. Another of Nigel's friends from Juilliard, Pieter Daniel, who made his orchestra debut at the age of 12, will also perform.

Ticket prices range from £25.50 to £68 for the 7.30pm gala concert. See www.thsh.co.uk or call 0121 780 3333.

Gig choice? Listen to what Mama Said

Mama Said and 7 Years outfit Lukas Graham, from Denmark, bring their soul-pop to Birmingham O2 Academy on Sunday and the same night Traffic co-founder Dave Mason brings his Traffic Jam to Bilston's Robin 2.

In Digbeth, Leeds indie rockers The Pigeon Detectives play the O2 Institute on Wednesday, with Lucy Spraggan on Thursday and Oxford's Glass Animals on Friday.

Leamington Spa singer-songwriter Joe Dolman plays the Sunflower Lounge in Brum on Thursday. Dutch Uncles play the Hare and Hounds in Kings Heath on Monday. The following night it's Swedish psychedelic rock with Josefín Ohn and The Liberation. World music gets a look-in at the Glee Club in Brum with blues masters Tinariwen on Wednesday.

The times they are a-changin'

Menopause The Musical, an all-singing all-dancing comedy is on its way

The show about ladies of a certain age will unite one of Britain's best known singing sisters with three familiar faces from TV drama.

Maureen Nolan will join Cheryl Fergison (pictured) who played Heather Trot in EastEnders with Rebecca Wheatley, from TV's Casualty, and Penny Dreadful actress Ruth Berkeley. It is on at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre on Thursday, March 9.



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SUNDAY'S TV MARCH 5

CHOICE



Dara Ó Briain (left)

Robot Wars (BBC2, 7pm)
New series. Dara Ó Briain and Angela Scanlon present the first group heat, with eight teams facing off through two group battles in the arena for a place in the grand final. A new twist on the format sees random house robots being sent to attack the competitors if they stray into the wrong part of the arena. Jonathan Pearce commentates on the action, while Professor Noel Sharkey, Dr Lucy Rogers and Professor Sethu Vijayakumar judge the operators' skills and select a victor in the case of an uncertain outcome.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. 7.30 Match of the Day. (R) 9.00 The Andrew Marr Show. 10.00 The Big Questions. 11.00 Regional Programme. 12.15 Bargain Hunt. (R) 1.00 BBC News: Weather. 1.15 Homes Under the Hammer. (R) 2.15 Flop It! (R) 3.15 Escape to the Country. (R) 4.00 Songs of Praise. 4.35 Shop Well for Less? (R) 5.35 BBC News. 5.50 Regional Programme.
6.00 The Big Painting Challenge. Mariella Frostrup and Richard Coles present the show from the National Portrait Gallery, where the artists face two of their hardest challenges. Firstly, they have to produce a self-portrait, most of which seem to capture the subject looking afraid. They are then joined by sitters Angela Rippon and Floella Benjamin and challenged to capture their famous faces accurately on canvas.
7.00 Countryfile. The team explores the South Downs. Helen Skelton discovers why dark skies are important for animals. John Craven visits the Bloomsbury Group's rural retreat, and Matt Baker meets a pony that is blazing a trail across the landscape. Tom Heap travels to Spain to get to the bottom of Britain's vegetable crisis, and Adam Henson investigates new ways to stop cattle from roaming.
8.00 Call the Midwife. Dr Turner helps a couple whose daughter was born without limbs to have her fitted for prosthetics – but the experience provokes different reactions from her mother and father.
9.00 SS-GB. Archer tracks down Spode, who confesses to murdering his brother, before going in search of the missing atomic bomb plans – but the resistance are still targeting him.
10.00 BBC News. 10.20 Regional Programme. 10.30 Match of the Day 2. Mark Chapman reviews the day's Premier League action, which featured Tottenham Hotspur v Everton at White Hart Lane, and Sunderland v Manchester City at the Stadium of Light.
11.35 American High School. A student whose father is in prison has developed his own business.
12.20 The Celebrity Apprentice USA. 1.45 Weather for the Week Ahead. 1.50 BBC News.

BBC2

6.30 A to Z of TV Gardening. (R) 7.15 An Island Parish. (R) 7.45 Around the World in 80 Gardens. (R) 8.45 Countryfile. (R) 9.45 Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. 11.15 Nigel Slater's Dish of the Day. (R) 11.45 Nigellissima. (R) 12.15 MOTD2 Extra. 1.00 Triathlon. 2.30 Live Athletics: European Indoor Championships. Gabby Logan presents coverage of the third and final day from the Kombank Arena in Belgrade, Serbia, where medals are awarded in 11 events. The finals of the women's and men's 800m, 3,000m and 4x400m relay will all take place on this concluding day, in addition to the women's 60m and long jump, plus the men's high jump and triple jump, and the conclusion of the heptathlon. With commentary and analysis from Steve Backley, Steve Cram, Colin Jackson, Denise Lewis and Paula Radcliffe.
7.00 Robot Wars. New series. Dara Ó Briain and Angela Scanlon present the first group heat, with eight teams battling it out for a place in the grand final. With commentary by Jonathan Pearce.
8.00 Top Gear. New series. Another helping of four-wheel features, including test drives and reports on the latest models, plus a celebrity taking to the show's test track in Star in a Reasonably Priced Car.
9.00 Special Forces – Ultimate Hell Week. The seven remaining contestants arrive in Australia for the final challenge, where they undergo training with the Special Air Service Regiment – but must first undergo a gruelling exercise to see if they are physically prepared for what is to come. Those that make it through this stage face tactical interrogation and an endurance race wearing weighted rucksacks. Last in the series.
10.00 Film: London Road. (2015) Premiere. Ipswich residents' real accounts of a series of murders committed in their neighbourhood are presented in song. Fact-based musical, starring Olivia Colman and Tom Hardy.
11.30 Film: Papillon. (1973) A Frenchman imprisoned for life on Devil's Island for a crime he did not commit makes a desperate bid for freedom. Fact-based drama, starring Steve McQueen.
1.55 Taboo. (R) 2.55 Sign Zone: Question Time. (R) 3.55 Holly City. (R) 4.50 This Is BBC Two.

ITV

**6.00 CITV: The Aquabats! Super Show! 6.25 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) 6.35 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) 6.45 Sooty. (R) 6.55 Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) 7.00 Oddbods. (R) 7.05 Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) 7.30 Scrambled! 7.35 Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) 7.50 Ultimate Spider-Man: Web Warriors. 8.20 Horrid Henry. (R) 8.45 Teen Titans Go! (R) 9.05 Adventure Time. (R) 9.25 ITV News. 9.30 Countrywise: Guide to Britain. (R) 10.00 Peston on Sunday. 10.55 Gino's Italian Escape: Hidden Italy. (R) 11.25 Chopping Block. (R) 12.25 Who's Doing the Dishes? (R) 1.30 ITV News: Weather. 1.35 The Voice UK. (R) 2.50 Little Big Shots. (R) 3.50 The Chase. (R) 4.50 Tipping Point. (R) 5.50 Regional Programme: Weather.
6.00 ITV News: Weather.
6.15 Harry Hill's Alien Fun Capsule. Madcap panel, who presented by the comedian, show presided over two teams nominally tasked with saving the planet from any potential alien invasion. (R)
6.40 Five Gold Rings. New series. Game show, hosted by Phillip Schofield, in which contestants compete to identify images on an LED floor while viewers can play along using the series app.
7.45 The Voice UK. The second live knockout show, which sees three of Tom Jones' acts eliminated, while the others go through to a place in the quarter final. Jennifer Hudson performs in the studio.
9.00 The Good Karma Hospital. Lydia and Ruby visit a convent to make a seemingly miraculous diagnosis, but the treatment of a young nun and the senior doctor's interfering attitude creates tension between them.
10.00 ITV News: Weather. 10.20 The Nightly Show Best Bits. New series. Highlights from the previous week.
10.50 Peston on Sunday. Political magazine, presented by Robert Peston. (R)
11.50 Premiership Rugby Union. Mark Durden-Smith and David Flatman present action from the 17th round of fixtures, including Leicester Tigers v Exeter Chiefs, Bath v Wasps, and Newcastle Falcons v Saracens.
12.40 Jackpot247. 3.00 Chopping Block. (R) 3.50 ITV Nightscreen. 5.05 The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)**

CHANNEL 4

**6.15 The King of Queens. (R) 6.40 The King of Queens. (R) 7.05 The King of Queens. (R) 7.30 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 7.55 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 8.25 Frasier. (R) 9.00 Frasier. (R) 9.30 Sunday Brunch. 12.30 The Simpsons. (R) 1.00 The Simpsons. (R) 1.30 The Simpsons. (R) 2.00 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces. (R) 3.00 Location, Location, Location. (R) 4.00 Channel 4 News. 4.30 Film: Fantastic Four. (2005) Sci-fi comic book adventure, starring Ioan Gruffudd.
6.30 The Jump. The remaining contestants compete for a place in the final, battling it out in the air jump, an event that requires them to gain the most height during a ski jump. They then move on to the Giant Slalom – the fastest event in the competition, on a much longer and steeper course than previous slalom events. Presented by Davina McCall.
8.00 Rivers with Jeremy Paxman. The presenter explores the Severn, Britain's longest river, which flows through both England and Wales. Along the way, he explores the largest ship graveyard in the country, meets the last practitioners of an unusual form of fishing, and takes part in a coracle regatta. He finally reaches the source of the river, where he meets a local poet.
9.00 Homeland. Carrie follows a lead, Saul meets an old friend, and Ina takes a stand. Starring Claire Danes, Rupert Friend and Mandy Patinkin.
10.00 Gogglebox. Capturing the households' instant reactions to what they are watching on TV from the comfort of their own sofas. (R)
11.00 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown. Jimmy Carr hosts the words-and-numbers quiz as Sean Lock and Henning Wehn compete against Jon Richardson and Victoria Coren Mitchell. (R)
12.00 Film: Broken City. (2013) A New York private eye hired to find out if the mayor's wife is having an affair discovers a web of political corruption. Crime thriller, with Mark Wahlberg and Russell Crowe. 2.00 The Last Leg. With Rob Delaney and Sharon Horgan. (R) 2.55 Under Lock and Key. The stories of families whose loved ones are locked away in hospitals. (R) 3.50 Phil Spencer: Secret Agent. A pink property in Southend-on-Sea. (R) 4.45 Kirstie's Vintage Gems. (R)**

CHANNEL 5

**6.00 Milkshake! Peppa Pig. 6.05 Peppa Pig. (R) 6.10 Milkshake! Monkey. (R) 6.15 Milkshake! Bop Box. (R) 6.20 Paw Patrol. (R) 6.30 Bob the Builder. (R) 6.45 Fireman Sam. (R) 6.55 Rupert Bear. (R) 7.05 Oily the Little White Van. (R) 7.10 Wanda and the Alien. (R) 7.25 Little Princess. (R) 7.35 Paw Patrol. (R) 7.50 Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) 8.20 Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) 8.35 Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) 8.50 Shimmer and Shine. (R) 9.20 Peppa Pig. (R) 9.30 Peppa Pig. (R) 9.40 Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) 9.50 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) 10.25 Football on 5: The Championship. (R) 11.20 Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) 11.50 Film: The Fifth Element. (1997) 2.10 Film: Spies Like Us. (1985) 4.10 Secrets of the National Trust with Alan Titchmarsh. (R) 5.10 Cruising with Jane McDonnell. (R)
6.05 Inside Windsor Castle. Documentary marking the centenary of the Windsor dynasty by examining the history of the royal residence over the past 80 years, beginning with the fire of 1992. (R)
7.00 Inside Windsor Castle. A look back at the series of events that shaped the monarchy between 1936 and 1952, using dramatic reconstructions and an extraordinary archive of film. (R)
8.00 Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords. Series. Cases include a woman with rental arrears of almost £3,000 after renting a house out, and a team investigates poor living conditions above a Birmingham shop.
8.55 5 News Weekend. 9.00 The Bruce Forsyth Story: From the Palladium to the Palace. New series. A look back at the entertainer's 75 years in showbiz, featuring candid interviews with Forsyth and contributions from biographers, colleagues and famous fans.
10.30 An Audience with Bruce Forsyth. The versatile veteran entertainer reveals his many talents in a feast of song and dance before a VIP audience, who quiz him about his remarkable career. (R)
11.35 Bruce Forsyth's Comedy Heroes. The entertainer discusses his favourite comics. (R)
12.35 Peter Kay: The Early Years. (R) 12.55 SuperCasino. 3.10 Secrets of the National Trust with Alan Titchmarsh. (R) 4.00 When Kids Kill: Catfish Killer. (R)**

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Sound of Song 8.00 Kiri Te Kanawa at the BBC 9.00 Film: The Hunt (2012) 10.50 Sound Waves: The Symphony of Physics 11.50 Every Breath We Take: Understanding Our Atmosphere 12.50 Timeshift: Hurricanes and Heatwaves – The Highs and Lows of British Weather 1.45 Mumbai High: The Musical 2.50 Kiri Te Kanawa at the BBC 3.50 Close
ITV2
11.45 The Voice UK 1.00 2Awesome: 2Awesome 1.05 2Awesome: Guideance 1.40 2Awesome: Fame High 2.05 2Awesome: Third Wheel 2.30 2Awesome: LA Story 2.50 You've Been Framed! Gold: Top 100 Holidays 3.50 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway 5.25 Film: King Kong (2005) 6.25 FYI Daily 6.30 Film: King Kong (2005) 9.00 Ibiza Weekend 10.00 Family Guy 11.30 American Dad! 12.30 The Cleveland Show 1.25 Ibiza Weekend 2.20 Teleshopping 5.50 ITV2 Nightscreen
ITV3
12.45 Film: The Belles of St Trinian's (1954) 1.45 FYI Daily 1.50 Film: The Belles of St Trinian's (1954) 2.35 Inspector Morse 4.55 Agatha Christie's Marple 6.55 Midsomer Murders 9.00 Tonight at the London Palladium 10.00 Carry On Forever 11.05 Film: Carry On Camping (1969) 12.05 FYI Daily 12.10 Film: Carry On Camping (1969) 12.55 Inspector Morse 2.45 Wycliffe 3.40 May the Best House Win 5.25 ITV3 Nightscreen
ITV4
12.45 Live Darts: UK Open. The quarter-finals at the Butlins Minehead Resort. 5.00 Pawn Stars 5.55 Fishing Impossible 7.00 Live Darts: UK Open. The semi-finals and final at the Butlins Minehead Resort. 11.00 Film: Born to Raise Hell (2010) 12.05 FYI Daily 12.55 Film: Born to Raise Hell (2010) 12.55 The Football Mavericks 1.55 I Want That Car 2.45 ITV4 Nightscreen 3.00 Teleshopping
ITV5
12.00 The Jump 1.40 Film: Step Up (2006) 3.40 The Goldbergs 6.05 The Big Bang Theory 7.00 Film: Unstoppable (2010) 9.00 Marvel's Agents of SHIELD 10.00 Film: The Grey (2011) 12.15 Celebs Go Dating 2.20 Marvel's Agents of SHIELD 3.05 Gap Year 3.55 Hollywood Film
11.00 The First Film (2015) 1.25 Hugo (2011) 3.50 Carry On Behind (1975) 5.35 Ice Age: Continental Drift (2012) 7.15 Johnny English (2003) 9.00 Mr Turner (2014) 11.55 Cheap Thrills (2013) 1.40 Wrong Turn at Tahoe (2009) 3.30 Close

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
GI Joe: The Rise of Cobra, Channel 5, 11.05pm
When a powerful experimental weapon is snatched by a mysterious terrorist organisation, two of the soldiers guarding it are recruited into a top-secret military strike force. As they go in search of the stolen technology, they uncover a plot by its creator to take over the world. Action adventure, with Channing Tatum and Sienna Miller. (2009)

TUESDAY
Deadly Pursuit, Channel 5, 3.15pm
An Alaskan wilderness guide visits a friend in LA, where he meets and falls in love with a well-off city girl. She clearly feels the same because when he returns home, she decides to follow him – only to come up against his ex-girlfriend and a sinister drug operation. Romantic thriller, starring KC Clyde. (2015)

WEDNESDAY
Two Wrongs, Channel 5, 3.20pm
Nurse and single mother Sarah struggles to balance her work and home life, but her worst nightmare is realised when her daughter Lauren is abducted while walking home alone from school and she faces a moral dilemma if she is to save her child. Thriller, starring Gillian Zinser. (2015)



Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl, Friday, BBC1, 10.35pm

THURSDAY
Perfect Life, Perfect Lies, Channel 5, 3.15pm
Four young women meet up at a school reunion, where they unearth a time capsule in which they buried their deepest, darkest secrets. Inside the box is a revelation that unlocks the mystery of a tragic death 10 years earlier. Thriller, starring Kacey Clarke. (2016)

FRIDAY
Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl, BBC1, 10.35pm
A buccaneer and a blacksmith commandeer a British ship and set sail in pursuit of a pirate captain who has kidnapped a colonial governor's daughter. However, their quarry and his crew are under a curse that turns them into living skeletons – and makes them impossible to kill. Swashbuckling fantasy adventure, starring Johnny Depp, Orlando Bloom, Keira Knightley and Geoffrey Rush. (2003)

Harry's new series is out of this world

Only a fevered imagination such as that belonging to Harry Hill could come up with the format of this extraordinary show.

Each week, two teams of celebrity guests are presented with an unusual task – to find a way of saving Earth from invasion and possible destruction by rogue aliens.

Often, when such a threat is depicted in a science fiction TV show or film, the extra-terrestrials seem to think they can take over the planet because humans are either a pushover or not worthy of their consideration – Hill wants to prove we're neither of those things by finding items that prove we are all good fun and therefore should be saved.

Along the way there are lots of gags, sketches and special guests who look on as amusing items are put forward for Hill's perusal – he ultimately decides what should be included in the Fun Capsule, and the more a team manages to have submitted, the more likely they are to win the game.

"It's great to be back on ITV with an all new format that finally tackles the problem of an imminent and prolonged war with space aliens, by proving to them that us humans are really a lot of fun to hang out with!" grins the comedian.

The channel's comedy commissioning editor Saskia Schuster adds: "We're really excited to have Harry back on ITV, and we're confident that the human race will be safe in his hands with this brand new panel show packed with laughs, silliness and of course, fun."

The keyword when it comes to this series is certainly 'silly', but while some may think it's a derogatory term, it's actually used in its most positive sense here.

The world is a dark and scary place at the moment, and sometimes being able to forget our woes by just being plain daft is a wonderful thing, so Hill should carry on the good work as long as is humanly possible!

Last week's opening edition was both bonkers and hilarious in equal

measure, and there's no reason to think that this one won't be either. If anything, this week's promises to be even better thanks to an appearance by Kathy Burke; she rarely pops up on TV these days, so when she does, you know it's for something both close to her heart and worth tuning in for.

Although she has appeared in many dramatic roles, Burke remains best known for her comedy appearances alongside Harry Enfield, as well as Absolutely Fabulous, Gimme Gimme Gimme and Walking and Talking, a sitcom based on her own teenage experiences.

It's quite a coup to have tempted Burke back to TV – we suspect she may be a fan of Hill's and so keen to work with him.

She will be joined on the show by celebrity chef and TV personality Ainsley Harriott (will Percy Pepper and Susie Salt make it into the capsule? Stranger things have happened), comedian Joe Lycett and morning talk show host Lorraine Kelly.



Harry Hill's Alien Fun Capsule, Thursday, ITV, 8.30pm

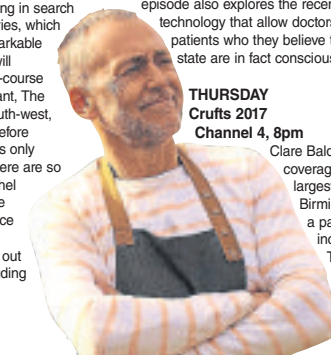
BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
Mutiny Channel 4, 9pm
New series. Nine men recreate a voyage by William Bligh in 1789, when he and his loyal crewmen crossed 4,000 miles of the Pacific Ocean from Tonga to Timor after being cast adrift from HMS Bounty by mutinying seamen and left for dead. SAS: Who Dares Wins chief instructor Anthony Middleton is in charge of a crew of eight made up of sailors and complete novices, attempting the journey in a replica 23ft open wooden boat, with similar equipment and the same rations of food and water that Bligh's men had. Continues tomorrow.

TUESDAY
The Secret Life of the Zoo Channel 4, 8pm
At Chester Zoo, Rothschild giraffe Tula is a week overdue after a 13-month pregnancy. But keepers are anxious that history could repeat itself – she gave birth to a stillborn calf last year. Cameras also follow this year's brood of penguin chicks. They are about to face the ordeal of joining the main pool, where they must compete for fish with the adult penguins. And baby silvery gibbon Eko learns how to swing between ropes - 50 feet up. All the keepers can do is watch anxiously from below.

WEDNESDAY
Hidden Restaurants with Michel Roux Jr Channel 4, 8pm
It seems that for some chefs it's not quite enough to serve up new and unusual dishes – they want their restaurants to be out of the ordinary as well. In this new series, Michel Roux Jr is going in search of some of Britain's 'ésecret' eateries, which are hidden within some truly remarkable locations. He's hoping the visits will inspire him as he creates a three-course menu for his own hidden restaurant, The Oast House. He begins in the south-west, where he ventures into a forest before checking out a floating café that is only accessible by boat. It turns out there are so many of these hidden gems, Michel needs help finding them all, so he also recruits Freddy Bird, who once transformed a dilapidated lido in Bristol into a restaurant, to check out some other unlikely venues, including a Latin American 'bustaurant'.

The House That £100K Built BBC2, 8pm
Surgeon Gabriel Weston investigates the most complex



Hidden Restaurants with Michel Roux Jr, Wednesday, Channel 4, 8pm

and mysterious part of the human body, the brain, meeting with extraordinary people with seemingly superhuman abilities. Dr Weston meets Derek, a man who was suddenly able to play piano after a head injury, and Paul, who has a hereditary genetic condition which means he can't feel pain. This episode also explores the recent developments in technology that allow doctors to identify if patients who they believe to be in a vegetative state are in fact conscious and aware.

THURSDAY
Crufts 2017 Channel 4, 8pm
Clare Balding presents further coverage from the world's largest dog show at Birmingham NEC, where a packed programme includes judging of the Terrier and Hound groups and highlights of the Agility and Flyball. Clare also meets last year's Crufts winner Devon, who is

competing in the Eukanuba World Challenge – a league of nations-style competition for top winners from different countries. Kate Beavan and Nim Patel team up to talk about dog health and welfare, Iwan Thomas reports on dog socialisation, and there's an appearance from cat-detection dog Molly.

FRIDAY
The Gadget Show Channel 5, 7pm
Actor, presenter, voiceover man, comedian, DJ, poet and jungle inhabitant – is there anything Craig Charles cannot turn his hand to? For the next 12 weeks Charles will anchor the revamped Gadget Show from its new studio base in Birmingham. Tonight, the show's other new host, tech journalist Georgie Barrat, kicks off a series-long challenge in which she endeavours to see if gadgets can improve the performance of Monkey Tree FC – an amateur football team hovering near the bottom of Division Two of the East Midlands Public Authorities League. Jon Bentley finds out how snappy Samsung's new 360 camera is by testing it out at a 'wall of death', filming motorcycles whizzing round a circular vertical wall at 40mph. Finally, Craig inboxes a brand-new Nintendo Switch, the much-hyped new games console, just one week after its worldwide launch.

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15/4/17	3 Days	Tall Ships (London)	Park Hotel
17/4/17	5 Days	Eastbourne	Imperial Hotel
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Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.

5	9	23	12			20			23	9	10	11
	13			9	1	25	10	11	23		19	
7	5	8	10	11		25	16	12	25	24		
	9		2		19	3		10		12		
	4	19	15	8	19	22	26	19		14	19	
4				20		13			22		20	
13	8	26	6	19	20		23	9	4	13	19	20
20		20				24		22			14	
9	20	19		4	18	9	20	6	10	22	17	
10		1		9		4					20	
17	8	10	5	13		13	19	4	4	9	14	
21		26		19	2	19	26	13		10		
13	20	19	6			11			21	19	5	18

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

Z	Q	R	O	E	B	T	C	I	L	W	Y	J
K	P	S	F	V	G	D	M	N	X	H	A	U

1	14
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20 R
8	21
9	22 A
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - but fit the same grid.

Cryptic Clues:

Across

- Sole reinforcement (7)
- Fish appears to be off! (5)
- Animal found in decreasing numbers (3)
- Holder of the post (6,3)
- He tries to prevent ill-feeling among the crew (5,6)
- Injury for which there is no earthly cure (6,5)
- Eats in bar, perhaps, but he won't drink in one (9)
- Howl for a type of rum (3)
- Silly Annie gets confused (5)
- Go ahead and give someone money (7)

Down

- Certain to jump (5)
- Close finish (3)
- Asbestos should contain it (4)
- They're a blend of the main races (9)
- Its strength can be shown by proof (7)
- The artist's sitting room (6)
- It may give an edge to the news, possibly (9)
- Wan friend takes cover (6)
- Get together - for getting in the harvest (7)
- Game that may come alight? (5)
- A boy naturally opposed to the current trend (4)
- He's had plenty of time to insulate the boiler (3)

	1	2	3		4	5						
6								7				
9				10				8				
			11									
				12				13				
15												
			14									
17								18			19	
										20		
21												
								22				

Quick Clues:

Across

- Income (7)
- Advance (3,2)
- Purchase (3)
- Solemnize (9)
- Association (11)
- Calligraphy (11)
- Dilatory one (9)
- Attempt (3)
- Haste (5)
- Seer (7)

Down

- Confute (5)
- Acquire (3)
- Heal (4)
- Stand for (9)
- Include (7)
- Vanquish (6)
- Made by hand (9)
- Numbness (6)
- Unfeeling (7)
- Hail (5)
- Trouble (4)
- Fitting (3)

Sudoku

6			9		4	3		
5				6	3		7	
					2	9		
	5	6					8	4
4	3			9				5
	7	2			6	1		
		8	2					
		9	4		8			1

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

2	5	7	3	1	6	0	9	4
6	4	9	5	7	2	3	1	0
8	1	3	4	6	9	7	2	5
5	3	8	9	2	6	4	7	1
7	9	1	8	3	4	2	5	6
4	2	6	1	5	7	9	8	3
3	7	2	0	8	5	1	4	9
9	6	5	2	4	1	8	3	7
1	8	4	7	9	3	5	6	2

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 7 Made to measure; 8 Interred; 9 Item; 10 Chill; 12 Latest; 14 Spiced; 16 Mishap; 18 Odes; 20 Comedian; 22 Get on together. Down: 1 Pawn shop; 2 Reveal; 3 Four; 4 Pendulum; 5 Assist; 6 Free; 11 Indicate; 13 Seafarer; 15 Custom; 17 Sedate; 19 Diet; 21 Magi.
QUICK - Across: 7 Temperamental; 8 Funereal; 9 Role; 10 Barrel; 12 Cleave; 14 Lessen; 16 Tubing; 18 Pair; 20 Timorous; 22 Supplementary. Down: 1 Regulate; 2 Appear; 3 Urge; 4 Implicit; 5 Untrue; 6 Wall; 11 Lengthen; 13 Vanguard; 15 Stripe; 17 Berate; 19 Abut; 21 Meek.

Quiz

- From which post did John Profumo resign in 1963?
- Who wrote the allegory The Pilgrim's Progress?
- In which country are the Pampas Plains?
- Which bird is called the chickadee in America?
- Of what is agaric a type?
- By what name do we know Michel de Nostredame?
- What is a quebracho?
- Which sport contests the Pilkington Cup?
- Which prominent politician was in the band Ugly Rumours in the 70s?
- What type of bird is a condor?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Inuits; 2 Sir Anthony Hopkins; 3 USA and Great Britain; 4 Click beetle; 5 Puma; 6 George Foreman; 7 Canada; 8 Franklin D Roosevelt; 9 Italy; 10 Anatoly Karpov.
Niner: DOVETAILS

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

6347 gives a bird,
9728 gives a second bird,
651172 gives a third bird.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

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The Ticket

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A real Gent – where would Olly go before a big night out?



EAT UP

Simple supper or fancy food, whatever tickles your tastebuds there's a dining destination to be found at Resorts World. But where would Olly go? We reckon he'd be up for a quick bite at TGI Friday's, with its American inspired fodder, it's grilling stuff. Think Chicken wings, Cajun shrimp, Jack Daniel's sesame mushroom strips and pulled pork sundae washed down with a bottle of Bud.

IN THE DRINK



There's no point waiting around feeling at a loose end before it's show time, Olly's a cheeky chappy and he's sure to be first up for a bevvie or two.

Head to The World Bar where there are more than 40 craft beers on offer from ales and stouts to lagers and even beer cocktails. Fancy a Jewellery Porter with a complex taste of coffee, chocolate and toffee with a delightful array of subtle fruit notes? Yes please, we'll drink to that.

PILLOW TALK



LUXURY LAYOVER

Splash out and make a night of it and stay at the recently opened Genting Hotel right on site. Prices start from £97 to £297 so it's up to you if you go a little crazy on a room or completely wild in a snazzy suite. With bars, restaurant and a spa you could even make a weekend of it. If it's a night with the girls, enjoy some treatments and make yourself beautiful before you see Olly in action and then dream about him later as you slumber in style.

CHEAP SLEEPS

If you're strapped for cash then save your pennies by catching your zzzs at the Premier Inn which is a 25-minute walk away from the Genting. From only £35 a night it won't stretch your budget leaving you some spare cash for drinks and if you're a really big fan, any Olly merch from the gig. If he spots you in an 'I heart' Olly T-shirt he may well ask: "Dance With Me Tonight!"

TRAVEL LIGHT

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Driving to the gig? Then there's loads of space to park right by the arena. Even better, if you pre-pay, you can avoid the queues at the payment kiosk and get to your seat a little bit quicker. No chance of you missing the support act either.

ON TRACK

If you fancy a few drinks or don't want to be stuck in traffic jams before or after the gig, then there's no need to drive. Trains run direct to Birmingham NEC from across the region making it easy peasy to get there on time.

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Its accommodation briefly comprises a through hallway, a guest WC, a kitchen/diner, a lounge, a conservatory, four generous bedrooms over two floors, a family bathroom, a dressing room and an en-suite to master bedroom. Outside there is a garage, driveway and gardens.

In more detail the through hallway has stairs off and doors off to the guest WC and kitchen/diner, lounge and conservatory.

The kitchen/diner has a range of wall, base and drawer units with work surfaces over, an integrated oven, hob with an extractor hood over, an integral dishwasher, ample appliance space and French doors to the lounge.

This room also has French doors to the conservatory and a built-in storage cupboard. The conservatory has tiled flooring.

Off the first floor landing is front-facing bedroom two, rear-facing bedroom three and bedroom four, which also overlooks the rear. The bathroom comprises a shaped panel bath with a shower over, a low level WC, pedestal sink and tiling to bathing. Off the second floor landing is the master bedroom which overlooks the front and includes a storage cupboard, open aspect to the dressing room with a built-in wardrobe and an en-suite with a shower cubicle, low level WC, pedestal sink and tiling to bathing areas.

Outside, the rear garden includes a paved patio area and is also laid to lawn, being fully enclosed and having gated access to the driveway. The garage has an up and over door, power and lighting.

Webbs Estate Agents is an independently owned family business built on reputation and service. Their experienced sales team offers expertise gained from extensive market knowledge. Buyers and sellers can expect to receive excellent market intelligence and strategic marketing advice.

WALSALL £220,000



TO VIEW THIS PROPERTY

AGENT: Webbs

TEL: 01922 663399

EMAIL: sales@webbsestateagents.co.uk

KEY FEATURES

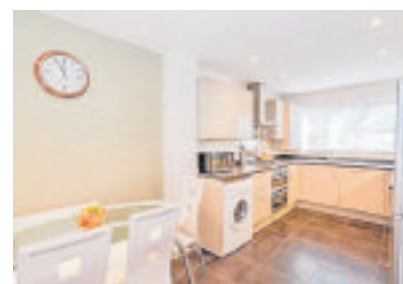
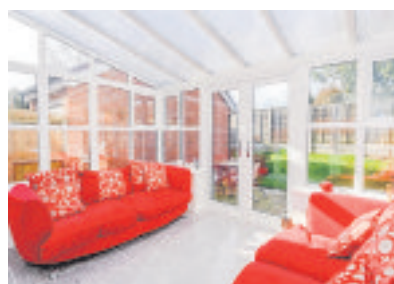
Wow factor

Modern semi-detached

4 bedrooms

Two-storey

Close to schools & amenities



He's sold

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If you are thinking of selling, look no further than the estate agents in these pages for the best local advice available.





Character first floor apartment in town

WALSALL

£60,000

Ideally located in the heart of Walsall town centre, The Carriages, Little Station Street, Walsall, is a character first floor apartment.

It is for sale through Goodchilds on offers in excess of £60,000 with no chain.

The apartment's accommodation briefly comprises of an entrance hallway, a lounge, a separate modern kitchen, a double bedroom, a bathroom with a bath and a fitted shower, and high ceilings throughout.

Contact Goodchilds on 01922 711 444 or visit www.goodchilds-uk.com



Impressive bungalow offers versatile style of living

BLOXWICH

£355,000

<<<

An impressive bungalow in a sought-after location in Stoney Lane, Bloxwich, Walsall, comes with four/five double bedrooms.

It is for sale through Webbs at £355,000 with no chain.

Deceptively spacious bungalow and well presented, it offers a versatile style of living.

In brief the property consists of a lounge, a dining room, a large kitchen/family room, a family bathroom with a sunken spa bath, five bedrooms, a double garage with a large driveway providing parking for a number of vehicles and an enclosed rear garden in a quiet location.

Call Webbs estate agents on 01922 663399 or visit www.webbsestateagents.co.uk



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Splendidly appointed detached family residence

This splendidly appointed detached family residence off Stafford Road in Stoney Lane, Bloxwich, Walsall, comes with four generous bedrooms.

It is for sale through Skitts at £375,000.

Its accommodation also includes three reception rooms, a study room and a utility cupboard, a concrete

BLOXWICH

£375,000

print driveway with parking for many vehicles and an established rear garden.

It also has gas central heating and UPVC double glazed windows.

The selling agents are expecting a lot of interest to be shown in this delightful and highly attractive property, and so are urging interested parties to book a viewing fast.

For further information, or to book that all important viewing, please contact Skitts on 01922 478104 or visit www.skitts.net



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NEW

WALSALL
BLOXWICH ROAD



- Motivated Seller
- Refurbished Home
- Lounge
- Dining Room
- Refitted Kitchen
- 3 Bedrooms
- Bathroom
- NO CHAIN

\$119,950

NEW

LITTLE BLOXWICH
GRENELL ROAD



SSTC
Similar Required

- Semi Det.
- Popular Location
- Through Hallway
- Lounge/Diner
- Refitted Kitchen
- 2 Bedrooms
- Paved Driveway
- Viewing Essential

\$130,000

REDUCED

BLOXWICH
MAY STREET



- Three bedroom Home
- Reception Hallway
- Lounge
- Kitchen Diner
- Bathroom
- Private Driveway
- Generous Rear Garden
- NO CHAIN

\$100,000

NEW

WALSALL
HARVEST GROVE



- Stunning Family Home
- Through Hallway
- Lounge, WC
- Kitchen/diner
- Conservatory
- 4 Bedrooms
- Bathroom
- Dressing Room, En-Suite

\$220,000


WALSALL
GILLITY CLOSE



- Dormer Detached Bungalow
- Entrance Hallway
- Large Family Lounge
- Seven Bedrooms
- Bathroom and Shower Room
- Sitting Room

\$550,000

NEWTOWN
STAFFORD ROAD



- Traditional Family Home
- Guests WC, Conservatory
- 2 Reception Rooms
- Refitted Kitchen
- 3 Bedrooms
- Shower

\$365,000

WALSALL
BENTLEY LANE



- Spacious Semi Detached
- Porch, Hall
- Utility, WC
- 3 Reception Rooms
- 3 Bedrooms
- Bathroom
- Rear Garden

Offers Over \$140,000

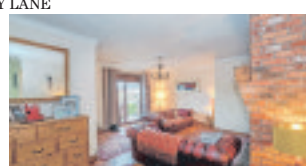

ESSINGTON
UPPER SNEYD ROAD



- Detached Family Home
- Porch, Hallway
- Lounge, Dining Room
- Conservatory
- Kitchen, Utility
- 3 Bedrooms, Bathroom
- Driveway, Garage
- Viewing Essential

Offers Over \$220,000

BLOXWICH
STONEY LANE



- Impressive Bungalow
- 2 Reception Rooms
- Kitchen Family Room
- 4/5 Bedrooms
- Double Garage
- Enclosed Rear Garden
- NO CHAIN

\$355,000



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NEXT AUCTION

THURSDAY 9TH MARCH 2017

AT

HAYWARD SUITE, MOLINEUX STADIUM

WATERLOO ROAD

WOLVERHAMPTON, WV1 4QR

6.30PM REGISTRATION 7.30PM START

Stoney Lane Bloxwich WS3

Guide Price £120,000



	2		3
	1	EPC TBC	

Contact your Local High Street Branch.

bloxwich@skitts.net 01922 478104

willenhall@skitts.net 01902 631151

bilston@skitts.net 01902 353578

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greatbridge@skitts.net 0121 520 2255

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westbromwich@skitts.net 0121 530 4240

wolverhampton@skitts.net 01902 788188

lettings@skitts.net 0121 520 2255

Smithfield Road, Walsall WS3

Guide Price £90,000



	2		3
	1	EPC C	

Scarborough Road, Walsall WS2

Guide Price £80,000



	1		3
	1	EPC D	

Dunstall Road, Wolverhampton WV6

Guide Price £70,000



	2		2
	1	EPC D	

Rookery Road, Lanesfield WV14

Guide Price £90,000



	2		3
	1	EPCTBC	

Beddow Avenue, Coseley, WV14

Guide Price £80,000



	2		3
	1	EPC D	

Sedgley Road East, Tipton DY4

Guide Price £30,000



	1		2
	1	EPC F	

Broad Lane, Essington WV11

Guide £100,000



**SOLD STC
SIMILAR REQUIRED**

	2		2
	1	EPC D	

Parkes Hall Road, Dudley DY1

Guide Price £95,000



	2		3
	1	EPC D	

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westbromwich@skitts.net 0121 530 4240

wolverhampton@skitts.net 01902 788188

lettings@skitts.net 0121 520 2255

Kings Road, Calf Heath, WV10

£500,000

	2		5
	4	EPC	C



Long Mynd Close, Coppice Farm, WV12

£259,999

	2		4
	2	EPC	D



Princethorpe Road, Willenhall WV13

£210,000

	1		3
	2	EPC	TBC



Lakelot Close, Willenhall WV13

£195,000

	1		3
	2	EPC	B



Gipsy Lane, Willenhall WV13

£159,950

	1		2
	1	EPC	D



Leven Drive, Coppice Farm, WV12

£155,000

	1		3
	1	EPC	TBC



Orchard Road, Willenhall WV13

£150,000

	1		3
	1	EPC	TBC



Granbourne Road, Bentley WS2

£145,000

	1		3
	1	EPC	TBC



Coppice Lane, Willenhall WV12

£145,000

	2		3
	1	EPC	E



Hawthorne Road, Wednesfield, WV11

£135,000

	1		2
	1	EPC	D



Redwood Way, Copice Farm, WV12

£130,000

	2		1
	1	EPC	C



Spindle Tree Rise, Willenhall WV12

£120,000

	1		2
	1	EPC	C



Nursery Road, Bloxwich, WS3

£115,000

	1		3
	1	EPC	D



Bilston Lane, Willenhall WV13

£100,000

	2		2
	1	EPC	F



Cotswold Grove, Coppice Farm WV12

£100,000

	1		2
	1	EPC	E





Elegant ground floor apartment with lovely views

WALSALL
£275,000

An elegant and impressive ground floor Grade II listed 1850s Victorian apartment, Flat 1, 6 Victoria Terrace, Walsall, is for sale through Goodchilds Estate Agents at £275,000.

Set in the arboretum conservation area overlooking the lakes with many original features throughout, this beautiful Victorian Grade II listed converted building is located in a private cul-de-sac close to Walsall town centre.

Its accommodation briefly comprises an entrance hallway with Minton flooring, a stylish lounge with exposed floorboards, a bay window and an open fireplace, a modern fitted kitchen, a grand dining room with many original features, a feature fireplace and views across the Arboretum Lakes.

There are also two double bedrooms and a modern bathroom.



In addition the property also has a cellar with two rooms, one currently used as a bedroom and a further bathroom.

Outside the property has an attractive rear garden with patio area and a shared side entrance.

Goodchilds Estate Agents & Lettings is a relatively young but dynamic company, having been established since 1994 as Goodchilds Property Investments offering affordable rental properties into the residential market.

A spokesman said: "We are extremely proud to have established our business as both a leading estate and residential lettings agency built by consistently exceeding client expectations. Social trends continue to change and the pressures of every day life challenge the speed at which we have to achieve things and buying or renting a home is no exception."

Call Goodchilds on 01922 711444.



Spacious and extended link detached home in prime location

WILLENHALL
£187,000 >>>

This spacious extended link detached property in a prime location in Farbrook Way, Summer Hayes, Willenhall, is for sale through Skitts at £187,000.

It has two reception rooms, a fitted kitchen, impressive large conservatory, downstairs WC, inner hall, three bedrooms, a shower room, garage, driveway, gardens, gas central heating and double glazing.

In more detail there is a Tarmacadam driveway to the fore with a lawned fore garden, the dining room has a bow window to the front, the lounge has sliding patio doors to the conservatory and a fireplace with a gas fire and storage cupboard. The kitchen has a gas oven and hob and a door to the garage. There are three bedrooms and a shower room. The rear garden is lawned and as well as the garage is a side store room.

For further information, or to book that all important viewing, please contact Skitts on 01902 631151 or visit www.skitts.net



40 per cent shared ownership is now available on apartment

BLOXWICH
£44,950 <<<

This stunning ground floor apartment in Eagleworks Drive, Bloxwich, with its own private access, is for sale at 40 per cent shared ownership at £44,950 with the option to buy the full share.

This immaculately presented ground floor maisonette is close to all local amenities and bus routes.

Via own entrance, its accommodation briefly comprises a through hallway, a lounge/diner, a kitchen, two double bedrooms and bathroom.

Externally there is allocated parking and visitor parking. Internal viewing is essential to fully appreciate just how much this home has to offer its new buyers.

The selling agents are expecting a lot of interest in this home.

To book that all-important viewing, please contact Webbs Estate Agents on 01922 663399.



K. Stuart Swash

AUCTION – 14TH MARCH 2017



42 BIRCHES PARK ROAD, CODSALL

Large three bedroomed Home, two Reception, fitted Kitchen, smart Bathroom, Gas C.H, Double Glazing, Garage, attractive Gardens. epc.C71

Guide: £144,000 - £149,000

VIEWING

**FRIDAY & SATURDAY,
3rd & 4th MARCH @ 10.45 a.m**



593 STAFFORD ROAD, WOLVERHAMPTON

Ready for modernisation - popular district - well located three bed Semi., Bathroom, Two Reception, Kitchen, Laundry, G.F. wc., Garage facility, long Rear Garden est. 100ft epc.F37

Guide: £93,000 - £98,000

VIEWING

**FRIDAY & SATURDAY,
3rd & 4th MARCH @ 9.45 a.m.**



68 THE LINDENS, NEWBRIDGE, WOLVERHAMPTON

Well located Ground Floor Flat 14ft. Lounge, Kitchen, Two Double Bedrooms, smart Bathroom Garage, pleasant rear outlook. epc.E54

Guide: £48,000 - £53,000

VIEWING

**FRIDAY & SATURDAY,
3rd & 4th MARCH @ 11.45 a.m**



240 BIRMINGHAM NEW ROAD, LANESFIELD, WOLVERHAMPTON

Elevated position, large Dormer Bungalow Porch, Lounge, big Dining Kitchen, Two Double Bedrooms, Bathroom, 19ft. F.F. Bedroom, Store Room, Gas CH., DG. Gardens, 24ft. Garage. epc F39

Guide £115,000 - £120,000

VIEWING

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, 3rd & 4th MARCH @ 11.00 a.m.
(Access via Mount Road and Lane Road)



14 WALSALL ROAD, WILLENHALL

Ripe for improvement & close to Town Centre. Spacious End Terrace, Porch, Three Reception, Kitchen Two Double Bedrooms huge 16ft Bathroom!! Outside - WC, Stores, lawned Garden. epc.F37

Guide £49,000 plus

VIEWING

**FRIDAY & SATURDAY,
3rd & 4th MARCH @ 12.00 noon**



168 - 169 STAFFORD STREET, WALSALL

Fronting Stafford Street (B4210), established shopping area. Double fronted - approx, 28ft. - Retail Unit, Kitchen (1st / 2nd floors not currently accessible)

Rear Yard, Parking. epc C.65

Guide: £85,000 - £95,000

VIEWING

**FRIDAY & MONDAY
3rd & 6th MARCH @ 10.30 a.m.**



49 HIGHLAND ROAD, DUDLEY

Large Semi, Double Glazing, CH., Two Reception, extended Kitchen / Diner, fitted Cloakroom Three Bedrooms, En Suite + sep. Bathroom Rear Garden. epc.E54

Guide: £84,000 - £89,000

VIEWING

**FRIDAY & SATURDAY,
3rd & 4th MARCH @ 10.00 a.m**



VIEWING OF ALL LOTS AT OWN RISK

PLEASE NOTE: Viewings are at the times specified so, should you arrive late, you may find your viewing time is limited or that we have moved on in order to maintain the time schedule.
Please Register for Catalogue

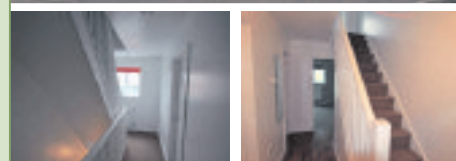
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Walsall
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Woodall Street, Walsall,

- Four Bedroom Detached
- Lounge & Conservatory
- Fitted Kitchen
- Bathroom & Jack and Jill Ensuite
- Garage
- Viewings Highly Recommended
- Side gate access
- Off Road Parking
- Rating: TBC
- Sorry No DHSS, Pets or Smokers

Monthly Rental of £750.00 PCM



Kinnerley Street, Walsall,

- Three Bedroom Detached
- Modern Fitted Kitchen
- Two Double Bedrooms and Single
- Gas Central Heating
- Viewings are highly recommended
- Located near M6 Motorway
- Main Bus Routes into Birmingham City
- On Road Parking
- Rating: 34
- Sorry No DHSS, Pets or Smokers.

Monthly Rental of £695.00 PCM



Cheniston Road, Willenhall

- Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Entrance Hall
- Through Lounge/Diner
- Fitted Kitchen
- Separate Utility
- Rating: 72

£650.00 PCM

Ely Place, Walsall,



- Three Bedroom Terraced
- Quiet Cul-De-Sac Location
- Lounge
- Modern Kitchen
- Bathroom
- Off Road Parking
- Rating: TBC
- Sorry No DHSS, Pets or Smokers.

Monthly Rental of £625.00 PCM



Loriners Grove, Walsall,

- Quiet and Private Location
- Gated Entrance
- Spacious Lounge
- Fitted Kitchen
- Two Bathrooms
- Rating: 78

£625.00 PCM

Broadway, Walsall



- Two Bedroom Apartment
- New Build
- Communal Hallway with Lift
- Kitchen/Lounge
- Family Bathroom
- Rating: 88
- Allocated Parking Space
- Gas Central Heating

£595.00 PCM



Clockmill Road, Pelsall,

- Two Bedroom Terraced
- Spacious Hallway
- Through Lounge
- Modern Fitted Kitchen
- Immaculate Rear Garden
- Rating: 59

£595.00 PCM



Cavendish Gardens, Walsall,

- Spacious First Floor Flat
- Large Lounge
- Fitted Kitchen
- Modern Bathroom
- Communal Gardens
- Gas Central Heating
- Rating: 79
- Sorry No DHSS, Pets or Smokers

Monthly Rental of £525.00 PCM



Manorhouse Close, Walsall

- two Bedroom Apartment
- Open Plan Lounge / Kitchen
- Bathroom
- Entrance Hallway
- Fitted Wardrobes
- Allocated Parking
- Secure Communal Entrance
- Rating: 71

£525.00 PCM



Foster Street, Walsall

- Three Bedroom
- Entrance Hall
- Lounge
- Fitted Kitchen
- Downstairs WC
- Off Road Parking
- Front and Rear Gardens
- Rating: 53

Monthly Rental Of £500.00 PCM



Squires Grove, Willenhall

- Two Bedroom Apartment
- Lounge with Double Doors
- Fitted Kitchen
- Master Bedroom with Ensuite
- Family Bathroom
- Allocated Parking
- sorry No DHSS
- Rating: 67

Monthly Rental Of £495.00 PCM



Bloxwich Road, Walsall,

- Two Bedroom Terraced
- 2 Reception Rooms
- Kitchen
- Bathroom
- DHSS Accepted
- Rating: TBC

£450.00 PCM



Marton Court, High street,

- Two Bedroom
- Bloxwich High Street
- Lounge
- Fitted Kitchen
- Communal Grounds
- Off Road Parking
- DHSS Accepted
- Rating: 68

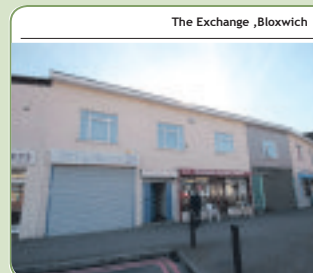
Monthly Rental Of £430.00 PCM



Taverners Close, Willenhall

- One Bedroom
- Ground Floor Maisonette
- Entrance
- Lounge
- Fitted Kitchen
- Double Bedroom
- Sorry NO DHSS
- Rating: 75

Monthly Rental of £425.00 PCM



The Exchange, Bloxwich

- One bedroom
- Entrance Hallway
- Large Separate Kitchen
- Electric Heating
- DHSS Accepted
- Double Glazing
- Sorry No Pets
- Rating: 7

Monthly Rental Of £400.00 PCM



Harrison Street, Walsall

- First Floor Flat
- two bedrooms
- Fitted Kitchen
- Bathroom with Shower
- Private Entrance
- Large Lounge
- DHSS Accepted
- Rating: 33

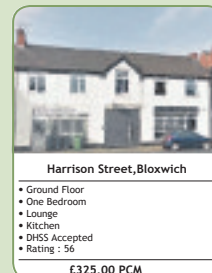
Monthly Rental Of £400.00 PCM



Broad Lane, Walsall,

- First Floor One Bedroom
- Private Entrance Hall
- Lounge with Electric Fire
- Kitchen
- Bathroom with Shower
- No Gas Central Heating
- DHSS Accepted
- Rating: 32

Monthly Rental of £350.00



Harrison Street, Bloxwich

- Ground Floor
- One Bedroom
- Lounge
- Kitchen
- DHSS Accepted
- Rating: 56

£325.00 PCM

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The new luxury Lexus LC

Luxury two-door is under £77,000

Lexus' new luxury coupe, the LC, has gone on sale today with prices starting from £76,595.

Set to arrive in the UK in July, the newcomer will be almost £25,000 cheaper than its key rival, the Mercedes-Benz S-Class.

Like the Mercedes, the Lexus will be available with a choice of two powertrains, although both will be identically priced.

At present, only the 471bhp V8 LC 500 has been revealed, complete with the world's first 10-speed direct-shift automatic transmission, while the 354bhp V6 hybrid-powered LC 500h is set to debut at next month's Geneva Motor Show.

Standard equipment includes LED lights, front and rear parking sensors, satellite navigation and leather seats, as well as sports pedals, a glass panoramic roof and 20-inch alloy wheels. All variants also get safety kit including adaptive cruise control, lane-keeping assistance, traffic sign recognition and blind-spot monitoring.

However, both cars will be offered with a pair of extra equipment packages that add goodies including 21-inch alloys, a carbon-fibre roof, half-leather upholstery and eight-way power-adjustable sports seats.

The loftiest of these packs also adds four-wheel steering, a limited-slip differential and a retractable spoiler, as well as Alcantara headlining. Other options include a Mark Levinson premium sound system, which costs £1,000, and a £995 colour head-up display

Toyota Aygo X-Clusiv gains more for 2017

Toyota has announced a raft of updates for its top-of-the-line version of the Aygo city car.

For 2017, the Aygo X-Clusiv is available with an expanded range of colours. Previously, the vehicle could only be specified in one colour, Electro Grey. Now, however, customers can choose from seven different options – with White Flash, Silver Splash, Bold Black, Red Pop, Deep Blue Buzz and Cyan Splash.

As with the Aygo X-Style and X-Press models, the X-Clusiv's interior door panels and dashboard are finished in the same colour as the exterior.

Other additions include Vogue leather seats with integrated headrests. The Aygo X-Clusiv does, however, lose its standard-fit electric canvas roof, with Toyota now offering this as an £895 option. Other standard features include 15-inch alloys, climate control, a seven-inch touchscreen infotainment system, reversing camera, dusk-sensing headlights, Bluetooth and DAB radio to name just a few.

The Aygo X-Clusiv is powered by Toyota's 1.0-litre three-cylinder petrol engine, which can be paired with either a five-speed manual or an automated manual transmission.

The flagship city car is on sale now, with prices starting at £13,035.

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Sound base for new ASX makes it a stable package

By John Griffiths

Mitsubishi is perhaps best known for some of its niche vehicles – from the Shogun range of SUVs to the high performance Evo saloons.

Just a few years ago the company combined the experience and expertise of both to produce a 'mass market' machine, the ASX cross-over. It was a timely decision, coming as it did at the start of the surge in sales of SUV-styled vehicles which shows no sign of abating.

Now, in the face of increasing competition in this sector, Mitsubishi has unveiled the second generation ASX, with a new look, completely redesigned interior, new entertainment system and technology, and a range of new, fuel-efficient engines.

It is sharply priced compared to its rivals – from £15,999 to £26,949 – and comes with a five year warranty to boot.

At first sight, though, even the new front end of the ASX doesn't make it stand out from a raft of SUV rivals.

Stand-out

But under the skin it has stand-put features, including the fact that it's built on the same platform as the legendary Evo, and is available with the same four-wheel drive system – including yaw control – which have helped that car become a winner on all types of surfaces.

That may be one of the reasons why 48 per cent of ASX models sold here have been those with 4WD – as opposed to as little as three per cent of its pseudo SUV rivals.

Originally sold with 1.6 litre petrol or 1.8 litre diesel engines, the ASK now comes with the option of 1.6, 115bhp petrol, 112bhp 1.6 turbo diesel and a 2.2 litre, 147bhp turbo diesel.

Four wheel drive is only available on diesel versions while automatic transmission is available on the 1.6 diesel, standard on the 2.2.

Fuel consumption and emissions range from 61.4mpg and a low 119g/km with the 1.6 diesel manual, two wheel drive version, to a very competitive 48.7mpg and 152g/km for the 2.2 diesel with both automatic transmission and four wheel drive. Weight saving, new low-energy LED lights and a regenerative braking system as well as engine refinements have helped to increase the car's performance and fuel efficiency.

The ASX is a few millimetres smaller than some rivals, but its relatively long wheelbase (and therefore short overhangs) are a bonus when off-roading, as well as freeing up generous levels of interior space. It can accommodate up to five adults and 419 litres of luggage (or 1,193 litres with the rear seats folded down).

The 2.2 diesel in the test car was lively (0 to 62mph in 10.8 seconds) but perhaps more important to drivers is the way it performed. With 147bhp and 340Nm of torque plus a rapidly responding auto transmission it was quiet



Matt Kimberley - 07891343404 (27309169)

and smooth, rarely breathing heavily, which adds to ride refinement.

You can change gear manually with the usual paddles behind the steering wheel, but there's no real need even when overtaking. The manual option is useful, though, for additional retardation on long downhill stretches.

The suspension in the latest model has been revised, too – considerably softer than a traditional SUV and with an accent on ride comfort, although there is little rock 'n' roll through winding stretches of road.

With the high 'command' driving position and visibility, plus the new upgraded interior, it makes the ASX a pleasant and relaxing car to drive.

When the going gets slippery, the computer-controlled 4WD auto mode means the amount of power diverted to the rear wheels can vary between two and 50 per cent, according to traction demands. For more serious conditions, there's a 4WD 'lock' position.

The base model is the ASX 2 (what happened to 1?) is well equipped with alloy wheels, air conditioning, upgraded seat trim, active stability and traction control, and a high contrast LCD instrument display. The ASX

3 adds climate control, DAB radio, rear privacy glass, automatic lights and wipers, front fog lamps and cruise control.

Next up, the ASX3 gets leather upholstery, four-wheel drive, aluminium pedals, a panoramic sunroof and a touch screen display with satnav and reversing camera.

The top of the range SX 4 comes with premium interior trim including Nappa leather, heated seats for those in the back as well as the front and USB charging points to help keep rear seat passengers happy with their journey-breaking technology.

The ASX's latest interior upgrades bring it up to scratch with many newer rivals for comfort and convenience, while improvements in efficiency help mitigate rising fuel and taxation costs.

As clearly recognised by its percentage of four wheel drive sales, it's already recognised for its keep-going anywhere capability. That shouldn't be a surprise as Mitsubishi has been producing 4WD vehicles longer than both Land Rover and Jeep – since 1933, in fact, and the ASX shares its platform and set-up of a rally icon which keeps its traction and stability on and off the road.

What are and how do hydrogen cars work?

Some alternatively-fuelled power options are well-known now. Electric cars, for instance, are gaining popularity and are becoming a common sight on UK roads, especially within cities.

Hydrogen-powered cars, however, are a slightly rarer sight. The technology they use is in its relative infancy, which means not a lot is known about how they work and the benefits they bring. We're going to find out.

First of all, just how do hydrogen cars work? Well, in fuel cell cars, power is generated by reacting hydrogen with oxygen. The energy that comes from this reaction is then stored in the car's batteries. The electricity stored here then runs the electric motors which then power the wheels. It's better to think of a hydrogen car as an electric vehicle that is able to charge itself up. At higher speeds, the car can use its supply of hydrogen to directly power the motor, instead of recharging the car's onboard batteries.

The benefit of this? Hydrogen isn't used as an existing energy source, like fossil fuels. Because hydrogen is in such abundance in our atmosphere, there's a plentiful supply, too.



You'll have to ensure you're within range of a hydrogen filling station

The best part? The only thing it emits is water. It also takes minutes to refill, compared to several hours to charge one powered by electricity alone.

However, there are a few drawbacks. Hydrogen, though plentiful in our atmosphere, is incredibly difficult to produce. Although there's lots of it about, it's most frequently found in compounds such as water – which makes it difficult to

separate. Because of the huge amount of energy needed to isolate the hydrogen, fossil fuels are required – which goes against the efficiency of the car.

Environmentally-friendly ways of producing hydrogen do exist, but they're expensive and can't create it in great enough quantities to be useful. So the only easy way of producing hydrogen is with fossil fuels.

There are other drawbacks. Currently, there are only two hydrogen cars on sale in the UK – the Hyundai ix35 and the Toyota Mirai. Choice of cars, therefore, is. Also, because hydrogen needs to be contained securely and at high pressure, these cars need to carry large tanks, which take up quite a lot of space inside the car.

You'll also have to ensure you're within range of a hydrogen filling station. Currently, there are just eight filling stations in the UK – with three in the London area alone. Though more are planned, for now it means you'll have to be conscious of how far you need to travel to fill up.

Lastly, and quite importantly, the cars are quite expensive. The Hyundai costs from £53,105, while the Mirai commands more of a premium at £63,100. Filling them up will cost around £65, and you'll get similar fuel economy to a regular diesel car.

For now, hydrogen cars are slightly hampered by a lack of infrastructure and the cost of creating their fuel in the first place. However, with more research and a lowering of price, hydrogen cars may yet turn out to be the smart choice for those looking to get around in the most economical fashion possible.



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Relegation fight aside Jones is back for talk

EVEN a survival mission at the edge of the Football League won't stop the first manager to take Wolves into the Premier League returning to Wolverhampton.

Dave Jones has a relegation fight on his hands after coming back into football with League Two strugglers Hartlepool United, writes Craig Birch.

The 60-year-old had been booked to appear at the Cleveland Arms Sports Bar, on Stowheath Lane, on Thursday March 30 before accepting the top job at the Victoria Ground.

But Jones has confirmed with organisers Sports Talk Events he will be in the Black Country as planned for the date, where he's set for a warm reception from a healthy pro-Wolves crowd.

Wolves legend Steve Bull will join him as a second special guest.

Jones was in charge at Molineux from January 2001 to November 2004. His crowning glory came in the 2003 Championship play-off final, where he masterminded Wolves' triumph and lifted the only trophy of his 20-year plus managerial career.

They emphatically defeated Sheffield United 3-0 through a first-half blitz at the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff.

Trophies to hit road in cricket double promo

TROPHIES for the ICC Trophy and Women's World Cup are to hit the road ahead of this summer's cricketing tournaments.

Dates have been announced when they will take to the streets of the host cities. Sponsored by Nissan, the Trophy Tour will see both the ICC Champions Trophy and ICC Women's World Cup spend 31 days travelling around the seven cities. They will start in Taunton on May 2 and finish at The Oval on June 2 for England v Bangladesh. The tour will be in Birmingham from May 13-17.

ICC Chief Executive David Richardson said: "The Trophy Tour is the start of what will be a fantastic summer of cricket in the UK with two major back-to-back events – the ICC Champions Trophy followed by the ICC Women's World Cup."

The two trophies will visit schools, clubs, venues and landmarks throughout May. Full details of all the activities will be announced in the coming months.

Nissan Global Head of Marketing and Brand Strategy Roel de Vries added: "We partnered with the ICC to bring cricket fans closer to the excitement of the game."

I'm ready to bounce back, says Zaber

OLD HILL boxer Manny Zaber is ready to bounce back stronger as he returns to the ring on Saturday following a first career loss last time out.

Zaber suffered defeat at the hands of Josh Baillie in the first title bout of his pro career on November 19. The 22-year-old suffered a cut above his left eye, forcing his team to make the decision for him to retire in the fifth round.

The 'Pac Man' is set to return to the ring on March 4 at Walsall's Town Hall and insists he can't wait to get back in there.

"I'm ready to go now," he said. "I can't wait just to get back in the ring."

Saturday will mark Zaber's 10th fight since turning professional two years ago. He is joined by a host of Black Country boxers on BCB Promotions' No Guts, No Glory show.

Walsall super lightweight Luke Paddock headlines in an eight-round contest alongside Tipton's Ricky Summers, Wolverhampton bantamweight Kyle Williams also features.

There is also women's boxing on the card as West Bromwich welterweight Lauren Johnson makes her professional debut.



Harry Worrall has been refereeing junior football for over 40 years



Awards ceremony – Harry Worrall with Kelvin Brittain



Harry at presentation with head of professional referees development Ray Olivier and chairman Phil Reade

Ref Harry has no plans to blow full-time whistle

HARRY WORRALL may have reached another impressive milestone, but he has no plans to blow the full-time whistle on his refereeing days.

The 78-year-old from Deansfield has been honoured by the Wolverhampton Referees' Association for 50 years sterling service and is determined to add a few more seasons to his tally.

Football League official Ray Olivier checked in at The Clarendon to present the award as Worrall joined Alex Hamil and John Kyte in an exclusive club with 50 years under their belts.

And Worrall is still going strong. He can be found calling the shots from the middle or chugging up and down touchlines across the Black Country in the Midland Junior League, Wolverhampton Sunday League and Bilston Youth Partnership.

And the 'old school' virtues are still very much on display. While some modern-day refs relish being in the spotlight, Worrall has always been happy to go unnoticed.

A quiet word here and there and a relaxed approach have served him well over the years, and helps ensure respect on both sides.

Respect

"I have really enjoyed it, and still do. That's why I carry on," said Worrall. "I am not as fit as I used to be, but I still get around and I have a lot of experience."

"I have had a bit of stick at times, but nothing major. It's all about man-management and how you talk to the players. You see the refs on the telly pointing their fingers and shouting 'come here' to the players. I never did that. I have a quiet word and talk to them in the right manner and sort things out. You have to talk to them properly to get their respect."

"I hadn't used to dish many cards out, in fact I haven't shown anyone a card for 20 years. The good refs are the ones that you don't notice."

Worrall first got the refereeing bug in English football's golden year, 1966, when he swapped playing for officiating.

"I used to play for Star Aluminium in the Wolverhampton Works League," he said. "I played at right-back and then ended up in goal! Someone mentioned

SPORTING MEMORIES

By Nick Elwell

As long as I can get up and down the pitch, I will carry on."

that the league were struggling for referees, so I went along and took the course. Within three seasons I had got my Class One, which was the top rank.

"I have really enjoyed it and made some really good friends over the years. My only regret is that I didn't start at an earlier age. Who knows, I might have got to the very top if I had done?"

"I intend to carry on as long as I can. I still think I have another two or three seasons left. As long as I can get up and down the pitch, I will carry on."

Worrall has plenty to be proud of during his whistle-blowing days with a day out at Wembley one of the many highlights, while he also caught an early glimpse of a talented youngster by the name of Wayne Rooney.

"I refereed the final of a Coca Cola Tournament at Wembley, but I can't remember the teams," said Worrall, who also officiated in a girls tournament in Minnesota as well as numerous local league finals.

"But I can remember taking charge of an England Schools game between Wolverhampton and Liverpool and Wayne Rooney played for Liverpool. I checked the name after the game because he played really well and looked a very good player."

"I refereed a Central League game at Wolves and Steve Bull played. He was facing a ban so he had a run out for the reserves against Peterborough and scored five times."

"I have had a laugh with him about that a few times over the years, he said it was the only time he scored five goals in a game. I was also the ref for former Wolves defender Frank Munro's testimonial."

Worrall is also a well-known figure around Molineux where he used to help in Wolves' press office on match-days.

"They used to call me Uncle Fester because I wore a big, long black coat," he joked. Not surprisingly Wolverhampton's most famous official Jack Taylor, who took charge of the 1974 World Cup final between West Germany and Holland, tops Worrall's list of best refs with another local ex-Football League man, Hamil, not far behind.

"I ran the line in a game once with Alex Hamil on the opposite side and Jack Taylor in the middle," said Worrall. "Jack was the best referee I have ever seen, number one for me."

"I got to know him quite well and he was a really nice, down-to-earth bloke. I still haven't seen a better ref than him. Alex was very good too, he had the players' respect and treated them with respect too."

Of the modern day officials, Andre Marriner gets a nod of approval from Worrall, but he is not too complimentary towards the pundits who sit in the studio.

"I do feel for the refs these days with everything being so analysed," added Worrall. "The pundits annoy me because they sit there in the studio and watch an incident over and over again from different camera angles and then slaughter the ref."

Difficult

"The ref only has a split-second to make a decision. People should have a go themselves and then they would realise just how difficult a job it is."

Worrall joins Hamil and Kyte as the exclusive members of the Wolverhampton Referees' Association's 50 club and is proud to be part of an elite group.

"It's a real honour to receive the award," he said. "And I am proud to be a member of the Wolverhampton RA, it's the biggest and best in the country with over 140 members."

"Quite a few family members were there to see me receive my award and Ray Olivier was brilliant. It was a nice night and a bit emotional."

WRA chairman Phil Reade was full of praise for his colleague's achievement.

"Harry is well liked by us all and what he has done is marvellous achievement," said Reade. "Ray Olivier said when he was on duty at Molineux, Harry always looked after him."

"It's unbelievable to still be refereeing at 78. He is one of those refs that says get on with it, it's a man's game. He used to man manage people really well."



What a save – when Wolfie's head came Harry carries it out for him



Wood pay the price for wastefulness

Quorn 1 Walsall Wood 1
WOOD came so close to picking up their first win of the year. Instead, a goal by Callum Thompson two minutes from time gave Quorn a share of the spoils – but Wood paid the price for wasting a host of chances.

It took just three minutes for the visitors to open the scoring. Liam Molesworth picking up the ball on halfway and running at the defence. He played the ball forward to Joey Butlin and carried on his run into the right of the box. Butlin held off two tackles and found Molesworth who was bundled over for a penalty which Drew Aiton hammered home.

With 20 minutes gone, Molesworth went on a crossfield run, played a neat 1-2 with Butlin but finished weakly. A minute later Molesworth released Butlin into the right of the box, but keeper Taylor McMillan saved bravely at his feet.

Right on half-time Aiton's low cross shot flew inches wide.

Just a minute into the second half Butlin cut inside from wide left before firing in a cross shot from an impossible angle that landed on the roof of the net. Just two minutes later Aiton set up Josh Mansell to fire a cross shot inches wide.

Craig Deakin's long ball forward found Butlin who was fouled just left of the D, he took the free kick himself, with McMillan pushing the ball onto his right hand post. From the left wing corner James Jepson powered a header towards his own goal, but McMillan made a brilliant reflex save.

Aiton forced another great save from McMillan on 64, but Wood were left to rue missed chances when, with two minutes left, a right wing cross deflected off the head of a defender to the far post and Thompson bundled home the equaliser.

Wood entertain Rocester on Saturday.

Sub Dorgan hits the winner as Lockmen complete the double

Shifnal 1 Willenhall 2
THE Lockmen completed the double over their Shropshire hosts thanks to a never-say-die attitude.

Shifnal had gone close on three minutes when a partially cleared corner on three minutes reached the edge of the box before being fired just over. However, from the goal-kick Mark Habbershaw flicked on and Chadd Birch gambled on a miscotrol which set him on a free run at goal, and finished by sliding a cool shot through the onrushing keeper's legs on four minutes.

The home side got off to the best possible start to the second half when they levelled on 48 minutes. A ball in from the Shifnal right was allowed to bounce across the box to the far post where Seth Ellis flashed home.

The Lockmen hit the post through Birch three minutes later, but the Lockmen did strike the killer blow when Birch fed substitute Matt Dorgan.

Shifnal sub Josh Bradburn denied Habbershaw a third goal before a spirited rearguard action kept Shifnal out through four minutes of injury-time.

'Black Widow' steps out for pro debut

ENGLISH Amateur Champion Lauren Johnson believes her professional debut on Saturday night will be the start of her journey to world titles.

The welterweight, from Wolverhampton, found her passion for pugilism while watching the London Olympics in 2012 and since entering the sport to lose weight five years ago is now competing in her first professional bout.

The 32-year-old didn't hang about in the amateurs for long before becoming British and English champion and she wants similar results in the paid game, starting with BCB Promotions' 'No Guts, No Glory' show – sponsored by

Boxing

the Grosvenor Casino Walsall – at Walsall Town Hall on Saturday. Johnson, known as The Black Widow, said: "I want to get to the very top. I want to be at world title level."

"As a woman really you have to be looking at European or World honours because there are no central area titles around. There are no English or British titles so you have to be looking at the European and the World titles, that is the aim as a professional for me."

"I am proud because I only had three and a half

years in the amateurs and I got a national title, the English title, silver medals in Haringey too, but it is time to kick on now and look forward and try and get these professional honours."

Walsall super lightweight Luke Paddock headlines the bill in an eight-round contest alongside Tipton's Ricky Summers.

Old Hill featherweight, Manny Zaber, also features alongside Birmingham bantamweight, Ijaz Ahmed, Wolverhampton bantamweight, Kyle Williams, and Coventry heavyweight, Dilly Singh.

Tickets are £30 for standard unreserved seating or £60 VIP Ringside and are available by calling 0845 111 2900. Doors open at 6pm

Bonus point gained after five try win

WALSALL United continue to climb up the North Midlands Reserve League after an excellent performance at Longton. They won 29-14 against a strong Longton second team, whose senior side play in the National League.

Walsall had a bonus point win after scoring five tries, with two for Jeffrey Williamson and one each for Dominic Wiczorek, Mark Reeves and Brandon Sayce. Jordan Lay kicked two conversions.

The Walsall third team overwhelmed a Stourbridge fourth team 62-8. Dan Retter added another four tries to his tally. Matt Foster, playing a rare game also scored two, in this convincing victory.

On Saturday Walsall first XV travel to North Staffordshire to face Newcastle. All games will now kick off at 3pm for the rest of the season.

Walsall u-16s 41 Moseley u-16s 19
GOOD support play by Joe Birch saw him run in a try after just three minutes. Birch scored again before the visitors scored out wide.

The Walsall forwards made good ground with Jordan Smith making an excellent carry before offloading to a support runner Birch to score again.

The second half saw the hosts play some superb rugby with several good offloads giving Ryan Potter a score. Moseley, to their credit, came back strongly and forced their way over for a converted try. Birch then finished off an attack with a try under the posts.

More good support play resulted in Birch beating defenders before powering over. Moseley got the next score with a converted try. But the hosts had the final score when good luck ball was moved to Ryan Potter who finished off well. Birch kicked two conversions and Tom Harris the other.

Last chance to join six-a-side league

SIX-A-SIDE football teams are being urged to sign up for a Walsall league.

Just a handful of spaces remain for the Walsall Leisure Leagues. It will cost just £5 to join at the moment – a saving of £20.

The league is held at Black Country UTC, Bloxwich, on a Monday and runs throughout the year. All matches are refereed by a qualified official and all the equipment is provided.

Leisure Leagues donates all the profits to good causes and because of this they insist that the full match fee is paid to the referee each week. To join, head to www.leisureleagues.net

★ ★ ★

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DON OVER BY TAYLOR GOAL

AFC Wimbledon 1 Walsall 0
TO truly enjoy those pulsating games that keep you on the edge of your seat, every now and again you have to endure matches that aren't so entertaining.

Sadly, Walsall's first-ever visit to the Kingsmeadow Stadium proved to be one of those uninspiring and uneventful affairs.

And to make matters worse for the 613 Saddlers who travelled, it was AFC Wimbledon who came away with all three points.

This was a match that – on the balance of play – should have ended in a draw. Cagey, scrappy and lacking in attacking quality, even Walsall boss Jon Whitney described it as 'ugly', writes Joe Masi.

Walsall have excelled since the turn of the year after settling in their dynamic 3-5-1-1 formation. Dons boss Neal Ardley responded by switching to a 4-3-3, pushing three strikers up against Walsall's three centre-backs and ordering them to go and win their individual duels.

Threat

Walsall dealt with the threat excellently, but with the ball spending so much time in the air, the Saddlers struggled to get it down and play.

And while charming in its simplicity, the Kingsmeadow also didn't help their cause.

On one of the few occasions Walsall did get the ball down and play, they broke through.

Isaiah Osbourne slipped Simeon Jackson in one-on-one with the Canada international trying to deftly flick over the onrushing James Shea. But the striker got just too much on the ball with his effort sailing inches over the bar.

And opportunities remained few and far between until the 70th minute when the Dons took the lead.

A goal fitting of the game, Taylor initially swung and missed the ball following Shea's long punt forward. But he managed to spin 360 degrees and then drive it into the corner. So Wimbledon had taken their one chance while the Saddlers rued Jackson's first-half miss.



Erhun Otzumer keeps a close eye on Sean Kelly during the Saddlers' defeat to AFC Wimbledon

In-form Proberts nets 11 in three games

Bloxwich 5 Pickwick 1
BLOXWICH stopped their recent run of poor form with a solid win against a weak Kings Heath Pickwick side.

Jamie Proberts helped himself to two first half goals and added a third after the break after Pickwick had pulled one back. Captain Eddie Marroco

and coach Steve Mallows were also on target.

Bloxwich 13 Wednesbury 2
BLOXWICH carried on where they left off with an emphatic victory over a poor Wednesbury side on a cold and blustery day.

Jamie Proberts scored early on against his old team and went on to score five. Jake Per-

kins added a hat-trick and Abu Saahil scored two, with further strikes from Matthew Whitehouse, Harry Robinson and Gary Oates.

Winning the league is now out of Bloxwich's hands; they hope to pick up nine points in their remaining three games to apply the pressure.

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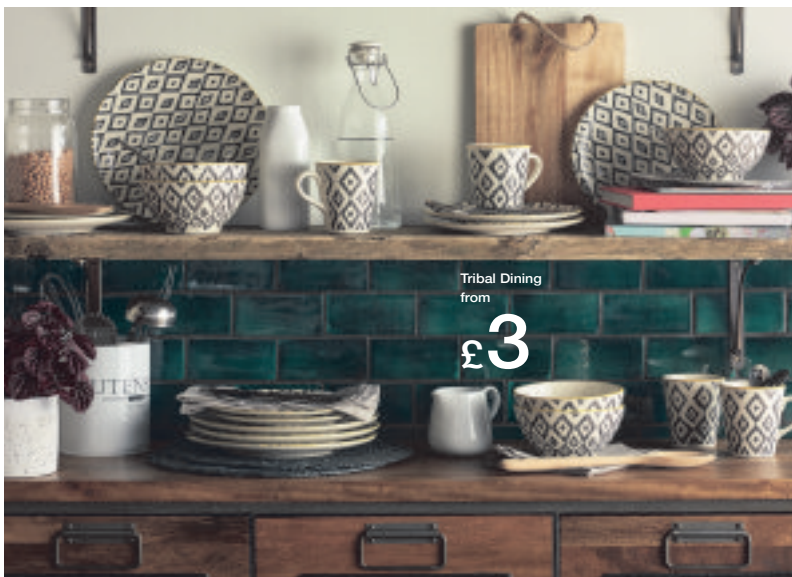
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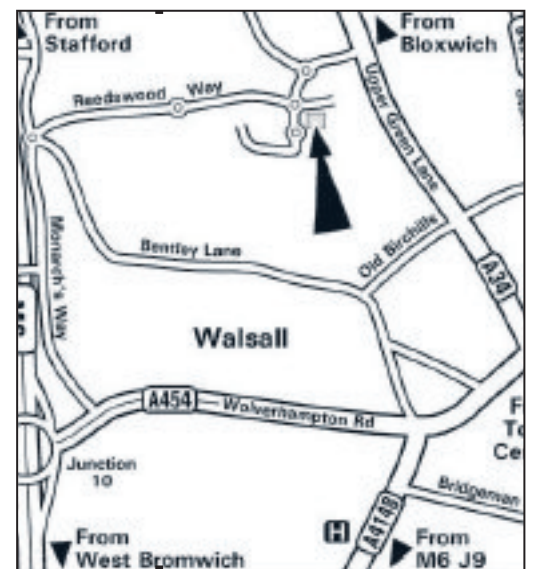
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